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IFSMA NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice



Maintenance of Tulagi Front Lead Light undertaken in August 2020 by the Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Authority AtoN Unit and sponsored by the South Pacific Safety of Navigation project.

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Contents

Secretary General's Report	2
From the Editor	3
The IMO Digest	3
IMO Secretary-General denounces 'no crew change' clauses	3
IMO maintaining connectivity during the pandemic	4
IMO and keyworker seafarers	4
"An unwanted sentence"	4
Chamber of Shipping	5
Union demands Maersk stop forced redundancies	6
ONE and the largest ULCC	6
INTERCARGO & call for Vaccines	7
WMU Report: Seafarers' experiences in COVID-19 pandemic	8
Ammonia fuel cells for deep-sea shipping	9
Advanced technology meets owners' needs for optimal routing	10
Danish Green transition	11
Ports and shore side power	12
The Brexit deal	12
Jamaica and Kenya sign MOU	13
Cruise ships to berth at port of Los Angeles without passengers	14
Solving the crew change challenge	15
ClassNK releases a new publication	17
ClassNK advises existing ships to install early Ballast Water Management Systems	18
New ISWAN research	18
Maritime New Zealand Annual Report 2019-2020	19
Operations in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea	21
CHIRP Maritime	22
Inchcape shows strong leadership in response to cruise crisis	23
The UN mission to SAFER oil tanker in Yemeni waters	25
Reefer container monitoring on board vessels	27
The Neptune Declaration	27

Secretary General's Report

Well here we are at the beginning of 2021 and we are all still badly affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), on behalf of the whole maritime industry, are leading the calls for governments to put seafarers and frontline maritime shore workers at the head of the vaccine queue and to designate seafarers as keyworkers, to avoid a repeat of the 2020 'crew change crisis'. ICS and ITF are demanding that governments, who are once again restricting travel as a reaction to new COVID-19 mutations, recognise the vital role seafarers play in the global supply chain.

The shipping industry knows that healthy, vaccinated seafarers are critical in keeping nations supplied with vital goods. Increasingly in 2021, this will include medical supplies such as syringes and the personal protective equipment (PPE) required as part of the roll out of COVID-19 vaccines. However, the spread of new variants of COVID-19 in Brazil, South Africa and the UK is contributing to stricter crew change restrictions globally. The Philippines, for example, has expanded its temporary crew change ban to 35 countries, barring foreign seafarers from disembarking at Philippine ports. The UK is banning travellers from South America, and the USA has also toughened its entry requirements.

Some countries are showing strong leadership in support of the maritime community. Singapore's recently-announced Sea – Air Vaccination Exercise (SAVE), which will see 10,000 frontline maritime personnel vaccinated for COVID-19 by the end of January. ICS and ITF will be lobbying governments to follow suit.

On 19 January, Guy Platten, Secretary General of ICS, commented: *'The benefits of vaccinating those responsible for transporting the vaccine and PPE around the world should be obvious. Governments must class seafarers as 'key workers' and give them priority access to the vaccine, as the inability to rotate crews from their ships risks the passage of the critical medical materials needed for the global vaccination effort. If we want to maintain global trade, seafarers must not be put to the back of the vaccine queue. Governments will not be able to inject their citizens without the shipping industry or, most importantly, our seafarers.'*

To put as much pressure as we can on nations Governments I hope you will have seen that on 26 January 2021, **The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change**, signed by over 400 organisations and companies across the Maritime Industry and Global Supply Chain, was released to coincide with the World Economic Forum being held remotely from Davos from 25-29 January. Entitled *Overcoming the Seafarer Crisis: Enabling Crew Changes and Repatriation*. You can see the full document by using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y2ptmdds>

Let us hope this can make an impact and please keep safe and well and I welcome your thoughts, ideas and concerns.

Jim Scorer

From the Editor

On the evening of 15 July 2018 a southbound convoy of eight vessels was proceeding through the southern section of the Suez Canal. At about 1750 the vessel at the head of the convoy, a container vessel, had an engine problem and, by about 1820, was anchored.

Thereafter, the other vessels astern of her either took steps to moor or prepared to moor. Not all were successful. At about 1948 the eighth (and last) vessel, a laden bulk carrier, collided with the seventh vessel in the convoy, another laden bulk carrier, which was believed to be at anchor or moored to the bank of the canal. They in turn collided with another vessel at anchor and moored. The three vessels ended up in such positions that they formed a triangle across the Canal, one heading towards the east bank, another heading towards the west bank and one heading down the Canal. Bows of two were in contact with each other and two were stern to stern. By about 2015 the three vessels had separated yet there was further contact.

To appreciate the deliberations of the London-based Admiralty Court readers are invited to see the judgement here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2ftogs8>

The IMO Digest

A summary of some of the news received from the excellent IMO Media service in recent weeks.

Illustrations per www.imo.org ©

IMO Secretary-General denounces “no crew change” clauses

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim has spoken out against “no crew change” clauses in charter parties, pointing out that such clauses exacerbate the dire situation of stranded seafarers and undermine the efforts undertaken to resolve the ongoing crew change crisis. This was reported by IMO on 21 December.

So-called “no crew change” clauses, which are demanded by certain charterers, state that no crew changes can occur while the charterer’s cargo is on board – hence not allowing the ship to deviate to ports where crew changes could take place. IMO’s Seafarer Crisis Action Team (SCAT) has been made aware of this worrying development in recent weeks.

In a strong statement† issued on 18 December, supported by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Mr Lim called upon all charterers to refrain from requesting to include “no crew change” clauses in charter parties, and further called upon ship owners and operators to reject them if they are demanded.

‘Such clauses exacerbate the mental and physical fatigue among exhausted seafarers, undermine compliance with the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006) and further threaten the safety of navigation’, Mr Lim said. He added that alternative

contractual clauses that do allow for crew changes during the pandemic are available and should be utilized.

‘Resolving the crew change crisis requires the best efforts of all stakeholders. The elimination of the use of “no crew change” clauses is just one of those efforts’, the Secretary General said, reaffirming the commitment of the Organization to assist all Member States, the industry and seafarers in this regard.

International organizations made statements at the latest meeting of IMO’s Legal Committee, LEG 107, to condemn the use of “no crew change” clauses in charterparties. The Committee invited submissions on the matter to its 108th session, scheduled to take place in July 2021.

As the crew change crisis now enters its tenth month, hundreds of thousands of seafarers remain on board ships well beyond the expiration of their seafarer employment agreements, some not being paid and all unable to be repatriated. A similar number remain unable to join ships, and as a result find themselves unable to begin their contracts and earn a living.

‘The situation continues to constitute a humanitarian crisis that threatens not only seafarers’ health and wellbeing but also the safety of navigation and the uninterrupted flow of the global supply chain’, Mr Lim insisted, adding: *‘Policies or practices that prevent or inhibit safe, regular crew changes should be revised or eliminated.’*



Illustration kindly provided by IMO

Per: www.imo.org IMO ©

As of 18 December, 46 IMO Member States and one Associate Member* have designated seafarers as key workers. This is essential to exempt these professionals from specific COVID-related travel restrictions, allowing them to travel between their country of residence and ships, and to be repatriated at the end of their contracts. There have also been some encouraging signs of progress in the application of the industry-developed framework of protocols for ensuring safe crew changes and travel during the pandemic, which were endorsed by the Maritime Safety Committee and circulated as MSC.1/Circ.1636.

The plight of stranded seafarers is highlighted in an IMO video featuring seafarers who describe the challenges they have faced due to the pandemic, and the impacts of the ongoing crew change crisis on their physical and mental health (see here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9y9h9et>)

† <https://tinyurl.com/y8a5ouk>

*Member States: Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Montenegro, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen.

Associate Member: Hong Kong (China). Dominica has been added to the list.

IMO maintaining connectivity during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created important challenges in terms of coordinating work on safety and security within the Central and West African common maritime space. To address this, IMO helped set up a new video conferencing service for the Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon.



The new system, fully installed since 18 December, allows regional stakeholders to continue their activities using web-based interactive video and maintain connectivity with partners in the region. This will enable the ICC to continue its work on the sustainable implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCOC¹).

It is understood that the Code's primary objective is to manage and reduce adverse impacts derived from piracy, armed robbery against ships and other illicit maritime activities, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The new equipment was purchased by IMO and partly funded with contributions from the United Kingdom and the West and Central Africa Maritime Security Trust Fund.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/yb8385f6>

IMO and keyworker seafarers

Regional webinar for Arab States and the Mediterranean

On 22 December IMO reported the latest regional webinar focusing on the crew change crisis had been held for the Arab States and Mediterranean. The virtual meeting was addressed by eight panellists drawn from across the maritime industry with the aim to share and identify best practices for universal application.



Member States from the region and other relevant government agencies and stakeholders involved in crew changes participated in the regional webinar.

IMO's representatives highlighted the latest developments, including the UN General Assembly resolution calling on countries to designate seafarers as key workers (to read more see here¹) and the published list of countries which have made this designation (again, see here²).

Other speakers emphasised the need for the whole of government approach in addressing the issues related to crew change and repatriation. All stakeholders including diplomatic missions were urged to cooperate and collaborate.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/yajjs5y6>

² [WhatsNewNews \(imo.org\)](https://www.imo.org/WhatsNewNews)

'An unwanted prison sentence'

for seafarers stuck at home and stranded at sea

On 6 January the United Nations in New York issued a news item regarding the plight of seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic

Hundreds of thousands of seafarers have been on board for many months longer than planned, stranded at sea due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Six months after the problem was first revealed, many of them are still struggling to cope with the ongoing uncertainty.

Throughout the year, the maritime transport industry has managed stay afloat, allowing food, medicine and other essential goods to be transported across the world, to stock the shelves even during the strictest lockdowns.

However, many seafarers were forced to stay at sea for several months longer than planned, sometimes for over a year: as 2020 comes to a close, the IMO estimates that some 400,000 seafarers, from all over the world, are still on their ships, even though their contracts have ended, unable to be repatriated.

Another 400,000 are thought to be stuck at home due to the restrictions, unable to join ships and provide for their families.

‘We didn’t sign up for this’

The mental health of seafarers has been sorely tested, as Matt Forster, an English Chief Engineer, based mainly on an oil tanker in the Middle East and Asia, told UN News in July. His contract was well overdue at the time, and he was having difficulty coping with the separation from his two small children.

He said: *‘I’ve done long contracts before, but this is different. It has a psychological effect, as there is no end in sight. It affects family life a lot more. My children are always asking me when I am coming home. It is difficult to explain to them’.*

Mr Forster is now back in England, reunited with his children, but his experience has made him think twice about his choice of career. He added: *‘We wanted to go to work, do our bit, and then come home. We didn’t sign up for what felt like an unwanted prison sentence.’*

‘I do not want to go back if I am going to get stuck again for another six months. And it’s not just me: a lot of other seafarers around the world feel the same way. It’s going to cause people to leave the industry.’

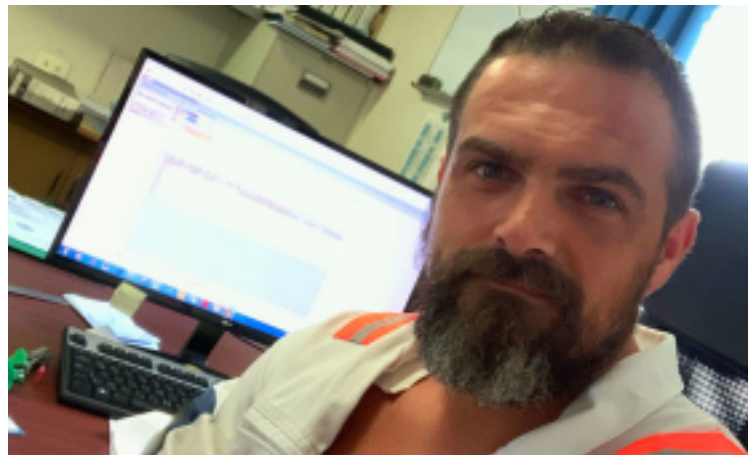
We have rights as human beings

The plight of seafarers this year has been described by IMO as an infringement of human rights. Speaking on Human Rights Day, in December, Secretary General Kitack Lim, paid tribute to maritime *‘frontline workers’*, and invited countries to ensure that their rights to safe and decent work conditions are recognized, respected and protected.

Hedi Marzougui, an American captain, echoed Mr Lim’s calls, and expressed his concerns about the mental health strain exerted on crews by the extended period on board.

He commented: *‘The longer you stay out there, the more fatigued you get physically. The hours, weeks and months start to add up, you get very tired, and you are not as sharp.’*

Captain Marzougui added that exhaustion can lead to accidents and said: *‘We also have rights as human beings, we have families of our own. We have a life to get back to. We are not robots, we shouldn’t be seen as second-class citizens’.*



Chief Engineer, Matt Forster, was unable to travel home once his contract had ended due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions.

Supporting essential workers

- For several months, IMO has been pushing for all governments to classify seafarers and other marine personnel as essential workers and, by December, around 45 countries had done so, which will make it easier for safe crew changeovers to take place, but this still leaves workers from many countries lacking the same protection.
- During the pandemic the agency’s Seafarer Crisis Action Team (SCAT) has helped thousands of distressed seafarers in desperate conditions, defending their rights to decent working conditions, access to shore-based medical care and repatriation.
- The UN General Assembly has also called on UN Member States to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers, in a resolution adopted on 1 December.



400,000 seafarers are still at sea even though their contracts have ended.

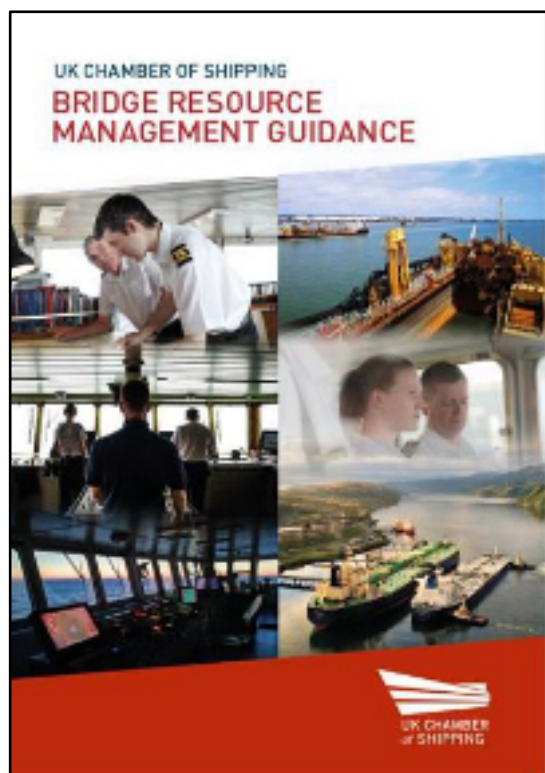
The IMO has called on governments to designate seafarers as essential workers.

Chamber of Shipping

Bridge Resource Management Guidance is the publication issued by the UK Chamber of Shipping. It was published in late December 2020 in partnership with Witherbys Seamanship.

This operational handbook explores what good bridge resource management looks like and details, for all types of vessel, techniques for effective and optimised bridge teams. It equips readers with the principles and practice necessary to avoid single point failures when executing a berth to berth voyage. Commonly encountered issues are

highlighted and high level BRM principles illustrate the importance of an effective management strategy.



This publication explores both the human and technical resources available to the bridge team, ensuring safe completion of the ship's voyage. Tools such as the PACE model explain how crew can address operational weaknesses while avoiding confrontation on board.

Case studies offer practical examples of ineffective BRM and solutions for how to improve passage planning. Illustrations effectively explain manning levels and the navigator/co-navigator concept.

Chairman of the Chamber's BRM Task Force, Ville Patrikainen of P&O Ferries, commented: *'We are delighted to announce the launch of the new guidance which we believe will introduce new industry wide standard principles of working as a team on the Bridge, and sets clear limits for interventions and aids defining roles and responsibilities.'*

Priced at £30.00 *Bridge Resource Management Guidance* carries the Chamber's Order Code: IT103447 and eBook Code of IT103448.

Union demands Maersk stop forced redundancies

On 23 December it was reported that Nautilus International, the union for maritime professionals, has demanded that AP Moller Maersk, end forced redundancies on its Dutch flagged vessels.

The union presented a petition to Maersk management urging that 24 Dutch seafarers at risk of being dismissed be offered alternative employment across the company.

The world's largest containership owner recently sold its five remaining ships which sail under the Dutch flag. Following the sale, Maersk announced that Dutch

Captains and Chief Engineers could remain in service, but that another 24 Dutch seafarers on the fleet will be made redundant.

Nautilus International deputy general secretary Marcel van den Broek said: *'It is incomprehensible to us and our members that a profitable company like Maersk, with over 300 ships in service, would not be able to find jobs for all 24 Dutch seafarers on their fleet in addition to the Dutch Captains and Chief Engineers.'*

'Our members do not accept this and demand that Maersk will immediately withdraw all announced layoffs.'

'A memorandum of understanding (MOU) on job security was concluded in 2011 between Nautilus and AP Moller Maersk. We still consider this agreement to be applicable.'



About Nautilus International

Nautilus International, an IFSMA Member, is the trade union and professional organisation for maritime professionals at sea and ashore. It represents 20,000 maritime professionals including ship masters, officers, cadets and shipping industry personnel, such as maritime pilots, inland navigation workers, vessel traffic services operators, harbourmasters, seafarers in the oil and gas industry, and shore-based staff.

ONE and the largest ULCC

It was announced from Singapore on 24 December that ONE had signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) for long-term charter of the world's largest Ultra Large Container Ships.

Ocean Network Express Pte. Ltd. signed LoI with Shoei Kisen Kaisha, Ltd. for the 15-year long-term charter of six new Ultra Large Container Ships (ULCS) with capacity of greater than 24,000 TEU each, said to be the world's largest class of container ship.

The new buildings are planned to be constructed by the consortium of Imabari Shipbuilding Co., Ltd. and Japan Marine United Corporation and ONE is expected to take delivery in 2023/2024.

It is understood that this new class of ship will join the core fleet of Ocean Network Express Pte. Ltd and form part of the group's continuing strategy to introduce large, modern, and fuel-efficient vessels to further strengthen its fleet competitiveness.

Currently (December 2020), the world's largest ULCS have a maximum capacity of slightly below 24,000 TEU.

The six new ULCS with capacity exceeding 24,000 TEU will help bring economies of scale and significantly lower carbon emissions through an advanced hull design that aims to maximize cargo intake and minimize fuel consumption.

It was reported that the vessels will be equipped with exhaust gas cleaning systems to meet the emissions regulations of IMO. This initiative represents ONE's continuing efforts to offer more competitive and best-in-class services to its customers through the introduction of ULCS that have a decreased environmental impact. It reaffirms ONE's commitment to operational excellence, business sustainability and environmental protection.



Ocean Network Express's Fleet List can be found here: [Fleet List | ONE \(one-line.com\)](https://www.one-line.com/fleet-list)

The group is the sixth largest container carrier with 1,500,000 TEU fleet size making 20 port calls around the world and 130 weekly service loops.

ONE's is headquartered in Singapore and Tokyo and jointly owned by the Japanese shipping companies Nippon Yusen Kaisha, Mitsui OSK Lines and K Line. It was formed in 2016 as a joint venture, inheriting the container shipping operations of its parent companies.

INTERCARGO & call for Vaccines

Call for seafarers to receive COVID-19 vaccine as a priority

Following the worldwide news that vaccines for COVID-19 are now a reality, it is paramount that authorities give priority to seafarers in their vaccination programmes, said INTERCARGO, the organisation representing the world's quality dry bulk ship owners, in mid-December.

INTERCARGO Chairman Dimitris Fafalios commented: *'As key workers, seafarers should be included in the early stages of a nation's vaccination programme. As a key element in the drive to reboot the world's economy, seafarers should receive vaccinations quickly and efficiently.'*

'We welcome new initiatives from national authorities and industry bodies to facilitate this and urge that these new

initiatives be brought forward and trialled as a matter of urgency, so that seafarers can once again travel safely between their home and their ships, and undertake port operations without the fear of infection.'

INTERCARGO Vice-Chairman Captain Jay K. Pillai added: *'It is of grave concern that at least 3% of all seafarers currently on board ships will be spending a second Christmas at sea, away from their families and friends, and an estimated 20% of all seafarers on board are still not relieved upon completion of their regular contracts, despite flights becoming available.'*

'The world is making great strides to combat the personal and economic toll taken by this virus. It is now time for the World Health Organisation to work in the direction of a worldwide acceptable COVID vaccination certificate, both on paper and electronically, and for the unique situation our seafarers face to be recognised.'

INTERCARGO has actively supported industry initiatives, including the recent IMO Maritime Safety Committee industry-developed protocols, which set out general measures and procedures designed to ensure that ship crew changes and travel can take place safely during the pandemic.

INTERCARGO welcomed the recent UN Resolution on Crew Change, which urges Member States to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers

Unfortunately, the seafarers' humanitarian crisis continues as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on crew change. Difficulties have been experienced in the practical implementation of the IMO protocols. While the earlier challenges focused on the non-availability of flights, visa issuance hurdles are currently the primary obstacle. In addition, the availability of testing facilities prior to departing home country and embarkation on ship, the difficulties faced when positive COVID-19 cases have been found on board, access to medical care and medical facilities, as well as facilitating evacuation of seafarers in need of urgent medical attention, continue to be extremely challenging.

In conclusion Captain Pillai said: *'Unfortunately, the seafarers on board remain under stress and at risk of mental illness, and those on leave are increasingly anxious to resume earning their livelihood. Both parties are left to the mercy of governments and their Port Authorities to facilitate crew change. While we applaud the positive steps taken by some governments to allow the gradual opening of ports to crew change, this process has not been smooth and continues to be full of setbacks.'*

'It is high time for ports and charterers to recognise seafarers as fellow human beings and extend compassion towards those who carry and care for their cargoes.'

WMU Report: Seafarers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

December the World Maritime University (WMU) issued a report focusing on the experiences of seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here IFSMA played a part in appealing for distributed questionnaires to be completed.

The report entitled: *Seafarers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic*

by Birgit Pauksztat, Michelle Grech, Momoko Kitada, and Rikk Bjerg Jensen is available here:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21677/wmu20201213>

At the top of page 7 there is a reference to IFSMA as being one of the organisations promoting the survey.

This document provides an overview of preliminary findings of a study on the experiences of seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose was to examine the impact of the pandemic on seafarers' work and life on board as well as on their mental health and exhaustion, and identify factors that may mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic.

Understanding the Effects of COVID-19 on Seafarers was the topic of the latest WMU Alumni Webinar and took place on 26 November. Work of seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic has been critical to ensure the global supply chain of essential goods and equipment. However, the recognition of seafarers as key workers is often being neglected, adding challenges to their regular occupational safety and health issues.

The webinar offered participants a unique opportunity to engage with a variety of international researchers who are examining the effect of COVID-19 on seafarers.

According to WMU four panels explored the topic in terms of support needed by seafarers, job security and financial challenges faced by UK seafarers, qualitative analysis on social, physical, mental, and economic well-being of seafarers, and a comparative analysis of the COVID-19 effect on seafarers and shore-based personnel.

Panel 1 was composed of a joint research team from four universities: the University of Queensland (Australia), Royal Holloway University of London (UK), the World Maritime University (Sweden), and Uppsala University (Sweden). The panel presented initial findings from a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of international seafarers. Over 700 seafarers responded. A key finding is the importance of connectivity to their families as well as institutional support.

Panel 2 led by Solent University (UK) provided a preliminary analysis of their longitudinal survey of UK seafarers that highlights the impact of COVID-19 which was found to be unequally felt by seafarers depending on their employment terms and conditions.

Panel 3 led by the University of Zadar (Croatia) shared the results of a global study of 752 seafarers who stayed either on board or at home in spring 2020. The study reveals that prolongation of periods on board and at home represent serious threats to seafarers' social, mental, physical and economic well-being.



Panel 4 led by Lloyd's Register presented their industry-wide surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic, partnering with the UK Chamber of Shipping, Safety at Sea and Mission to Seafarers. The results highlight differences between the effects of the pandemic on seafarers and office workers. It reflects serious concerns over seafarer mental health, the effectiveness of organisations' support and disease management and treatment of seafarers.

The webinar was moderated by WMU Associate Professor, Dr Momoko Kitada

And can be accessed on You Tube here: <https://tinyurl.com/yat8ak38>

It is understood that a total of 447 participants from 50 countries, and all continents, registered for the event that was opened beyond WMU Alumni to general registration from the public.

Ammonia fuel cells for deep-sea shipping

Interest in ammonia-powered fuel cells for the maritime sector is growing, but stakeholders have been hesitant to commit to investments in large-scale systems, according to ShipFC late in December.

Interest in ammonia-powered fuel cells for the maritime sector is growing, but stakeholders have been hesitant to commit to investments in large-scale systems, according to ShipFC late in December.



It is understood that the ShipFC project, granted funding from the EU's Research and Innovation programme, Horizon 2020, under its Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH JU), is aiming to secure a place for ammonia in the future of deep-sea shipping.

This project will equip the offshore supply vessel *Viking Energy*, owned and operated by Eidesvik and on contract to energy major Equinor, with a 2MW ammonia fuel cell, allowing it to operate for at least 3000 hours annually on clean fuel. Following the completion of that phase, the project will ramp up to qualifying 20MW fuel cell solutions for oceangoing vessels.

Dr Michail Cheliotis, Research Associate at the University of Strathclyde, lead partner in the project commented: *'The ultimate goal of the project is to demonstrate the feasibility of ammonia fuel cells for ocean going vessels and long sea voyages. Once the first phase of the project is completed, that's when the fun starts.'*

Scale of the project

Cheliotis added: *'The huge difference in scope makes ShipFC much more interesting than just a replication of Viking Energy. The similarities basically end with ammonia, because a 20MW power plant requires significantly different treatment.'* That said, he assures that scaling up the project is seen to be well within reach, given the prior knowledge of both fuel cells and ammonia as an energy carrier.

The project will consider three replicator vessel types, including a bulk carrier, an offshore construction vessel, and a container ship. Cheliotis tells that the work will involve close cooperation with replicator vessel owners and a thorough examination of vessel requirements.

A known commodity

Technical and economic knowledge developed in the Viking Energy pilot will be incorporated in a broader analysis of ammonia in the maritime sector and comparison with other alternative fuels.

Cheliotis continued: *'Ammonia presents certain technical challenges, but even though it is corrosive, the safety trade-off between ammonia and hydrogen favours ammonia. It is less explosive, requires less complex storage and transport solutions, and it is a well-known commodity from industry. Based on this experience, the necessary safeguards can be built in.'*

'We have seen that liquid ammonia is similar to liquefied gas in the handling process. Industry has a high level of maturity and an excellent track record in handling LNG and LPG, and this experience is proof that it can be done safely.'

'We will be looking at the entire life cycle of ammonia, from production to transport and bunkering. One of the ShipFC partners is a major supplier of ammonia, and we will be working together with them to address these issues.'

'Ammonia can easily be made from renewable resources, making it one of the fuels that will likely meet part of shipping's future green energy demand.'

Strathclyde University will also provide maritime safety analysis for onboard solutions. In Cheliotis's words: *'Part of our work will be to propose new safeguards and accommodations for marine installations of this size.'*



Ammonia + fuel cells = efficiency

In conclusion Cheliotis said: *'Successful cases have taken advantage of the most efficient fuel cells. We believe that we can hit the sweet spot of fuel cell technology with ammonia.'*

'As (fuel cells) do not require the same dedicated space as large two- or four-stroke engines, fuel cells can be distributed in modules, saving space and exploiting otherwise unavailable options.'

‘People are ready to listen to arguments for fuel cells. The technology is becoming more common, and stories of success from other projects in road and rail are getting media attention. Now we want to take advantage of fuel cell momentum and examine the use of ammonia in addition to hydrogen.’

‘Different solutions will be required to meet different challenges. The choice of solution will depend on a case-by-case evaluation. We will need many solutions to meet diverse needs in the maritime industry, and fuel cells powered by ammonia can be among them.’

ShipFC project partners

Partners here are: The University of Strathclyde (UK) and National Centre for Scientific Research Demokritos (Greece) which will assess safety criteria.

Norwegian members of the European consortium include NCE Maritime Cleantech, Eidesvik Shipping, Equinor, Prototech, Yara, and Wärtsilä Norway, responsible for fuel systems, ship design and stability, and vessel energy management.

Fraunhofer IMM (Germany) will assist Prototech in the development and construction of the ammonia fuel cell system.

Persee (France) will provide expertise on energy management controls and data.

Replicator vessel owners are StarBulk Management (bulk carrier), North Sea Shipping (offshore construction vessel) and Capital Ship Management Corporation (container vessel).

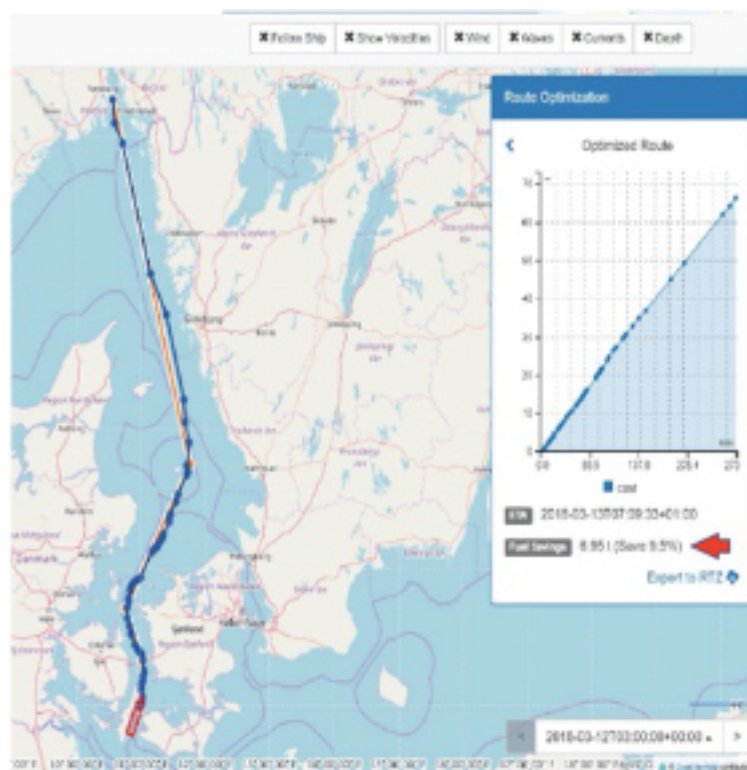
Advanced technology meets owners’ needs for optimal routing

Fuel consumption is the leading cost driver in shipping and remains the top fiscal concern of ship owners amid uncertainty surrounding bunker costs and availability. In the words of VoyOpt Marine Application Director Sverre Dokken: *‘Managing fuel consumption effectively means owners need increasingly to adopt new performance tools that leverage cutting-edge technology, including artificial intelligence.’*

‘As an automated, all-weather voyage planning service VoyOpt provides owners and crew with superior voyage optimization to improve not only fuel efficiency but also reduce emissions without compromising transit time, which is a key component for operators in a fiercely competitive business.’ This was reported in December by voyage data optimization provider VoyOpt™.

High reliability

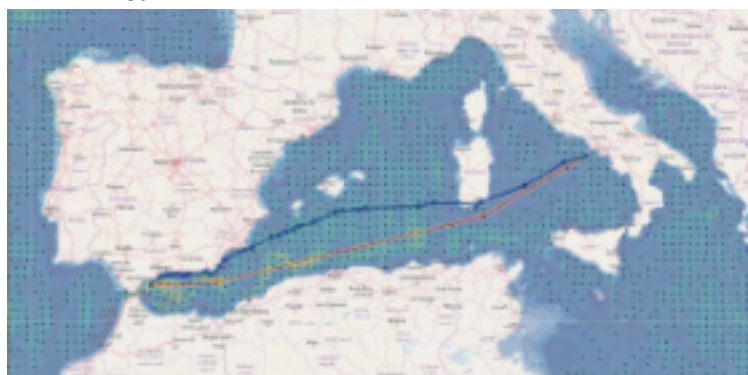
It is said that the system calculates more variables critical to vessel performance than any system, including local weather forecasts, ocean currents and wave dynamics, wind data, ship performance models, navigational information, and environmental regulations.



Shortsea (coastal) VoyOpt display showing route from Oslo to Kiel.

Photo: VoyOpt©.

VoyOpt selects the most secure forecast using Earth Observation (EO) and satellite data, probability algorithms, seasonal data, current weather, and climatology.



VoyOpt display showing optimized route between Spain and Italy.

Photo: VoyOpt©.

LNG carrier master, Captain Jørgen Grindevoll said he has grown to appreciate its ability to deliver the most reliable weather prediction – or *‘the one that is most likely to be correct.’*

Fellow trial end-user Captain Pär Brandholm, senior performance and technical manager with a well-known chemical tanker owner, said VoyOpt offers more detail in terms of blue-water voyages.

Brandholm added: *‘For me the biggest breakthrough is how VoyOpt aggregates weather data from multiple global systems and local forecasts, including hydrographical data and satellite data on wave height, winds and currents. Competing solutions use one global model, but VoyOpt uses AI to crunch these data streams into one, much more reliable forecast.’* In Captain Brandholm’s

fleet, thirteen vessels are connected to the system and live testing continues.

VoyOpt calculates voyage plans based on optimal engine power and speed, significantly lowering fuel burn and emissions while enabling highly accurate arrival time estimates (ETAs).

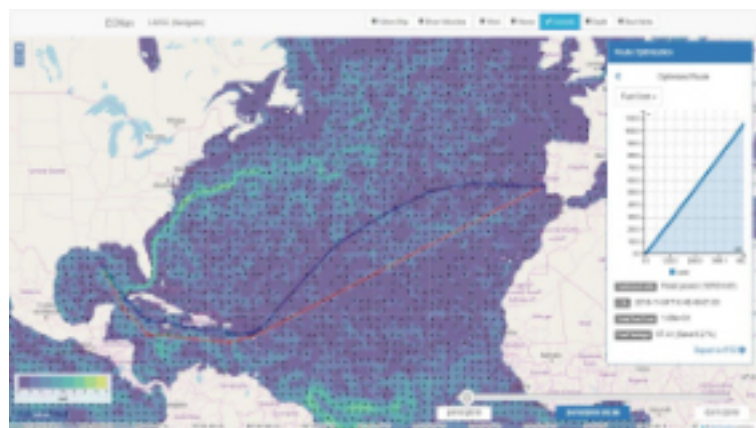


VoyOpt display showing optimized route from US to Germany.

Photo: VoyOpt©.

Grindevoll explained: 'The navigation officer enters a destination, and VoyOpt incorporates these factors to propose an optimised route.' He added that route display features in the graphical user interface (GUI) allows fuel savings to be monitored in real time.

He continued: 'My basis of comparison is 20 years' experience with other systems. Either they were optimized for open ocean sailing only, used only a single weather forecast, or looked only at wind predictions, when in fact currents affect the hull more than wind. The key differentiator with VoyOpt is the advanced route optimization function.'



VoyOpt display showing optimized route from US to Lisbon.

Photo: VoyOpt©.

Superior usability

'VoyOpt is intuitive and very easy to use,' said Brandholm who continued: 'The GUI is excellent and the system responds very quickly. You also do not need a huge book of instructions. Any ship master or bridge officer will understand it pretty much immediately. For me it scores very high on usability – and I have a lot of experience in performance and weather routing systems. VoyOpt also

gives the user the ability to import the route, which he can use directly on the bridge.'

Short-sea 'game-changer'

Coastal and short-sea trades make up 90% of all shipping in Europe. 'The majority of navigators on these routes choose to sail in a straight line, without consideration of waves, wind or currents,' said Dokken who added that VoyOpt considers all these parameters and dynamically calculates optimized routes to provide higher fuel efficiency. 'When it is commercially launched in a few months' time, I am confident VoyOpt will be a game-changer in short-sea.'

Boosting the bottom line

In conclusion Brandholm commented: 'Maximizing the positive effects of currents has been very useful for our ships sailing in the Gulf of Mexico. Using VoyOpt we have seen a reduction in fuel consumption from a few percent to 7% or 8%, as well faster transit times due to optimal routing. The lowest fuel consumption on the quickest route of course has direct financial benefits. I am sure other owners will experience the same benefits.'

Addressing the pain points

Dokken underscored how extensive collaboration with end-users helped to refine VoyOpt, with thorough validation studies demonstrating fuel and emissions savings. Industry difficulties indicate that ship owners need sustainability, safety and solvency, in response to environmental, performance and financial pressures.

Danish Green transition

At the centre of maritime cooperation with India

Danish Maritime Authority has taken the first step in the implementation of the Green Strategic Partnership between Denmark and India.

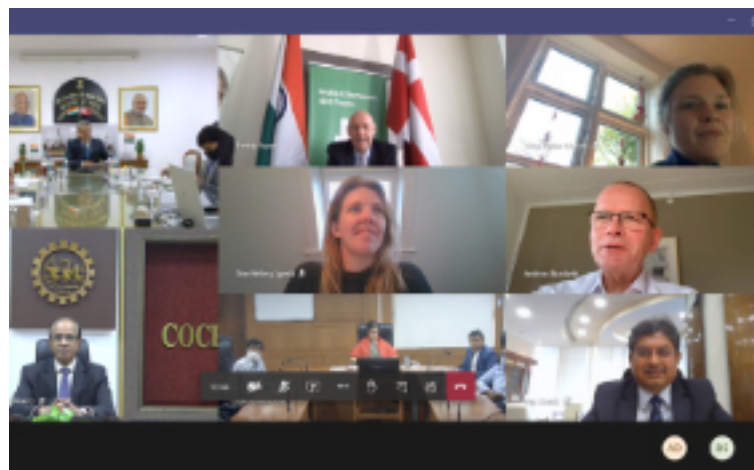
It was announced on 16 December that Director-General Andreas Nordseth of the Danish Maritime Authority had met online Secretary Dr Sanjeev Ranjan and a delegation from the Indian Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways for the third meeting of the Joint Working Group on Shipping.

Focus of the meeting was the Green Strategic Partnership between Denmark and India agreed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on 28 September last.

Of the meeting Nordseth commented: 'The positive dialogue between Denmark and India concerning maritime affairs and in particular green shipping can pave the way for innovation, trade and growth.'

'The Green Strategic Partnership between our two countries establishes a strong framework for our cooperation and mutual ambition of promoting a green transition of the maritime sector.'

It was reported that the meeting was joined by Ambassador Freddy Svane and his team at the Danish Embassy in New Delhi. The fourth meeting of the Joint Working Group on Shipping will take place in April 2021.

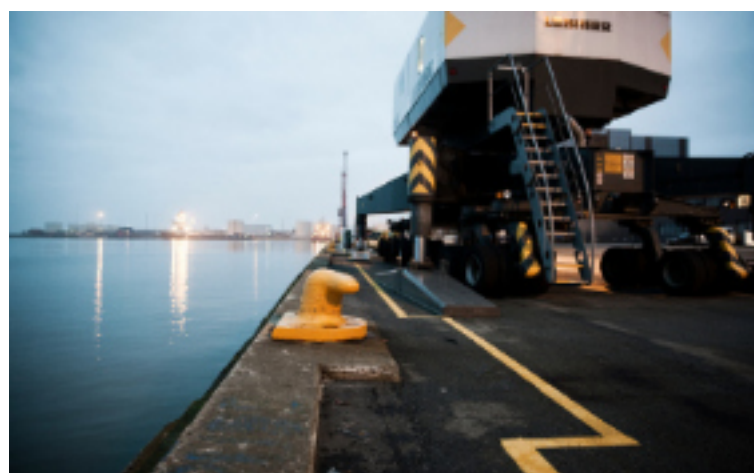


Readers wishing to learn more about the Danish Maritime Authority are invited to see here: www.dma.dk

Ports and shore side power

On 3 December the Danish Maritime Authority co-hosted a digital conference on shore side power in the Baltic Sea, together with the Danish Ministry of Environment and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

This digital event brought together over 100 participants with speakers from across the Baltic Sea Region, including non-EU members Russia and Norway, to discuss practical examples and the policy context of shore-side power facilities and how to ensure a transformation to a greener shipping and cruise industry in the Baltic Sea Region.



Among others, the list of speakers included Danish Minister of Environment, Mrs Lea Wermelin, who talked about the prospects for a green re-boot of the Baltic Sea Region post covid-19. She gave examples on the usage of shore side power for cruise lines and highlighted some of the recently adopted key political initiatives to promote increased investment in shore side power.

The conference concluded, that:

- Shore power is a sound business for ports and ship

owners.

- Scale is needed for shore power to reach its potential.
- Financing shore power facilities is possible through the EU.
- Ports play a critical role in making the Baltic Sea Region a model region for sustainable solutions in shipping.
- Political support for a more sustainable maritime business model is in place.

The conference was organised by the Danish Maritime Authority in its capacity as former chair of the Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy under the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and our work with Clean Shipping under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea States, the Danish Ministry of Environment and the secretariat for the CBSS.

Readers who may wish to read a short summary of the conference are invited to see here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y9vh44dm>

More background notes are available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y92yvo5s>

The conference was recorded and a video can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/488543910/681c375ef8>

Links to these documents and a PowerPoint presentation can be accessed through the DMA website at: www.dma.dk

The Brexit deal

Maritime professionals' union Nautilus welcomes approval

Presses for certification confirmation

Nautilus International is the trade union and professional organisation for maritime professionals at sea and ashore. It represents 20,000 maritime professionals including ship masters, officers, cadets and shipping industry personnel, such as maritime pilots, inland navigation workers, vessel traffic services operators, harbourmasters, seafarers in the oil and gas industry, and shore-based staff. Members are drawn from the UK, Netherlands and Switzerland.

On 30 December Nautilus International announced that it has cautiously welcomed approval of the future trade agreement with the European Union (EU) by the House of Commons (UK Parliament, Lower House).

While the deal does not include many of the assurances that the Union had been seeking during the last four years, it does mean that a no-deal Brexit has been avoided.

Continuation of tariff-free trade with the EU will come as a relief to the UK maritime sector, especially in light of the problems that delays in trade can cause, as was seen when many countries closed borders to the UK due to a new variant of the Covid-19 virus just before Christmas.

However, while the agreement will avert some of the likely downside caused by the UK defaulting to World Trade Organization rules on 1 January 2021, Nautilus has warned that much of the detail still needs to be resolved before the full impact on the UK maritime sector, and UK seafarers, can be fully understood.



The 1,240-page agreement was finally reached by the EU and UK on Christmas Eve, and passed by the UK Parliament on 30 December, just two days before the New Year's Day deadline. This has left very little time for the maritime sector to adjust to any unexpected arrangements to cross border trade, which the Nautilus has warned will lead to a bumpy road ahead.

Commenting on the situation on 30 December, Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson said: *'We have been clear from the start that a no-deal Brexit would have serious implications for UK seafarers and the UK maritime sector more widely, so we welcome the fact that this deal has been approved.'*

'However, our members working on ships of other EU shipping registers still need reassurances that their Certificates of Competency will continue to be recognised and what steps will be taken to expedite this recognition.'

'Alongside this, the UK government needs to stand by its commitment to maintaining standards and parity with Europe on for example social and employment standards and not engage in a new race to the bottom.'

Jamaica and Kenya sign MOU

Reciprocal Recognition of STCW Certificates

Shortly before the year's end the Maritime Authority of Jamaica (MAJ) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of Kenya to enable reciprocal recognition of STCW certificates for seafarers for their nationals.

On behalf of the Jamaican Government, MAJ Director General, Rear Admiral (ret'd) Peter Brady, signed the MOU during a ceremony conducted online due to pandemic restrictions. Nancy Karigithu, the Principal Secretary in the Kenyan State Department of Shipping and Maritime, signed on behalf of the Republic of Kenya, accompanied by Robert Njue, the newly-appointed Director General of the Kenya Maritime Authority.

A unique undertaking

The agreement means that Jamaican seafarers will now be able to serve on Kenyan-flagged vessels, and vice-versa. This undertaking is unique in that it establishes a Joint Committee on Shipping and Maritime Affairs. The

joint committee's mandate is not limited to the review of the implementation of the undertaking but extends to conducting joint studies in the field of maritime transport and facilitating discussions of maritime safety, security, education and training.

Describing the event as *'symbolic of the relationship between our two countries'*, Admiral Brady said: *'The Maritime Authority of Jamaica, and by extension the Government of Jamaica, is tremendously proud to participate in this official signing ceremony between the Republic of Kenya and Jamaica.'*

'This is a significant occasion for both our countries' seafarers and indeed our respective maritime parent bodies and Governments as we utilize the facility of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers to allow our professional mariners to legally work on board the ships that are flagged by our two countries.'

'We are linked by our past and we are determined to move our economies into the future by building partnerships and leveraging the maritime opportunities that abound in the global sphere,' he said.



Maritime Authority of Jamaica officials with the signed Memorandum of Understanding. See here left to right: Captain Steven Spence, Director of Safety, Environment and Certification; Bertrand Smith, Director of Legal Affairs; Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Peter Brady, Director General.

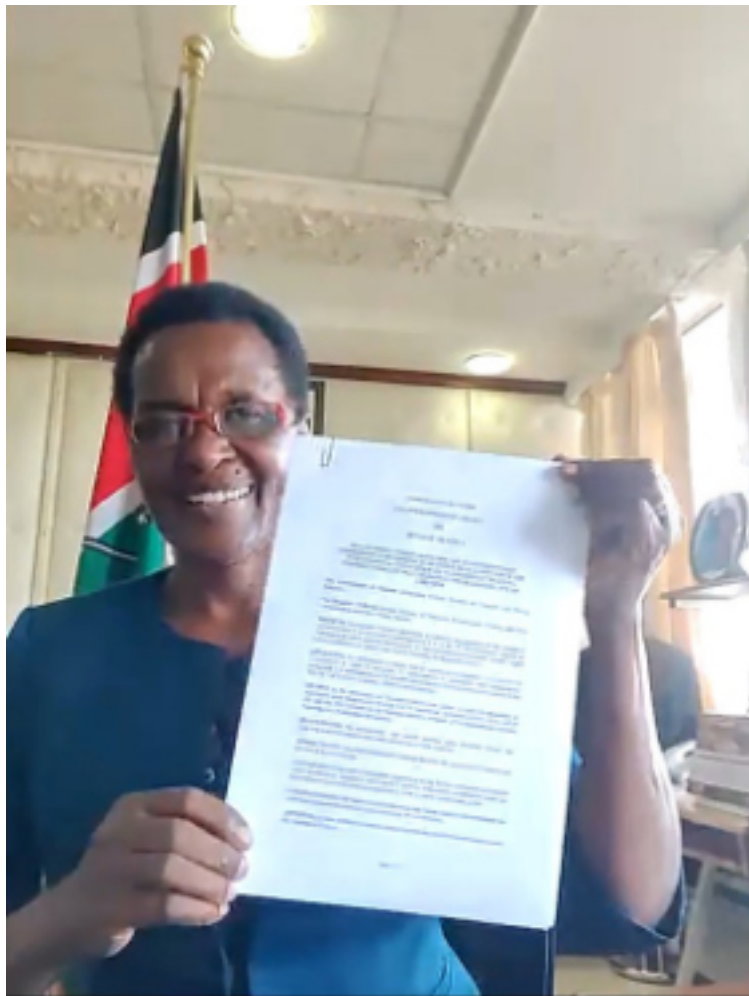
Praising the *'mutual benefits which will accrue under this arrangement'*, Mrs Karigithu said: *'We truly appreciate that going forward, the citizens of our two great nations can draw benefits in terms of maritime education and job opportunities in the shipping industry, following the execution of the undertaking on the recognition and endorsement of certificates as prescribed under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended;*

Jamaica is a signatory to numerous IMO Conventions, many of which are now enshrined in its Shipping Act and regulations made thereunder. One such Convention is the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 as amended, (STCW Convention). This Convention establishes the minimum standards for the

training and certification of seafarers who must meet the qualifications for operating international seagoing ships in the nautical and marine engineering departments of these ships.

Reciprocal provision

The Convention, through a reciprocal provision, affords the employment of nationals on any vessel which trades internationally and for countries to recognize the qualifications of other nations' seafarers whom they may employ on their respective ships. Jamaica now has undertakings for the recognition of certification under the Convention with nineteen countries including the United Kingdom. This allows its nationals, who have been awarded Certificates of Competency (COC) by the Maritime Authority of Jamaica, to work on the ships of these countries with whom it has a reciprocal arrangement, through the facility of the STCW Convention.



Nancy Karigithu, the Principal Secretary in the Kenyan State Department of Shipping and Maritime, signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maritime Authority of Jamaica.

The Republic of Kenya, through the office of Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing Urban Development and Public works, State Department of Shipping and Maritime, Principal Secretary, requested to enter into a MOU with Jamaica to provide for reciprocal arrangements under the STCW Convention for their respective seafarers to work on board ships flagged by the two countries.

Admiral Brady commented: *'We recognize that our seafarers must be trained and certified according to the standards laid down by the STCW Convention if international recognition is to be maintained. Our approved maritime institutions, represented here today by the Kenya Maritime Authority and the Caribbean Maritime University, and our administrations are recognized by the IMO's panel of competent persons and are on IMO's white list of countries which are deemed to give full and complete effect to the STCW Convention, as amended. This is very critical because internationally trading ships operate at global standards required by international rules and measures promulgated in treaties or conventions by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and both our countries have acceded to the STCW Convention which has been enshrined in our respective domestic laws.'*

'I am proud to say, both Kenya and Jamaica proudly serve on the IMO governing body as Council members. This places an extra obligation on us to ensure that, among other areas of maritime safety and security and the observation of the highest marine environmental standards at sea, Kenyan and Jamaican seafarers who operate the ships which conduct global trade must also maintain their quality standards as highly trained seafarers with internationally recognized certificates of competence duly awarded by our respective Administrations.'

'It is hoped that this Undertaking will serve to strengthen our maritime relationships that will redound to our two countries' economies and serve to build further cooperation in many other areas.'

Cruise ships to berth at port of Los Angeles without passengers

There was recently an expectation of the sight of more cruise ships — all without passengers — in and around the Port of Los Angeles in the weeks ahead.

Ports calls such as this for fuel, supplies and services are part of the cruise lines' operations to re-establish the ships in US waters as a prerequisite to meet Federal regulations in order to resume cruising in the future. This was reported by the port's media service at the end of December.

Cruise operations have been suspended since March due to the pandemic, and no date has been set yet for US passenger sailings. The port continues to closely monitor the situation and is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Coast Guard (USCG), US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), California Department of Public Health, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and other emergency and public health agencies. The CDC recently issued a *Framework for Conditional Sailing Order*, outlining a phased resumption of cruise ship passenger operations.

Princess Cruises, Holland America and Norwegian Cruise Line cruise ships were scheduled to send ships arriving in Los Angeles in the days after Christmas and running into the New Year, periodically docking at the Los Angeles Cruise Terminal for fuel, food, supplies, and/or services. No vessels will be carrying passengers, it is understood

The Port of Los Angeles is expecting more than two dozen cruise ship calls through to early February.



Port of Los Angeles Photo: per www.portofla.org ©

In addition to increased precautions to minimize community spread of and exposure to COVID-19, cruise ship safety implementations while at berth include Passenger Ship Safety Certificate (PSSC) training and Marine Evacuation System (MES) replacement.

No fewer than 93 cruise cancellations

In 2020, the Port of Los Angeles experienced 93 cruise cancellations—more than 70% of total cruises—due to the pandemic. It is estimated that each time a cruise ship calls in Los Angeles, it contributes about \$1 million to local businesses and the economy. Losing these cruise ships amounts to losing nearly \$100 million in economic activity on the LA Waterfront.

The Port of Los Angeles has remained open with all terminals operational during the COVID-19 pandemic.

North America's leading seaport by container volume and cargo value, the Port of Los Angeles facilitated \$276 billion in trade during 2019.

San Pedro Bay port complex operations and commerce facilitate one in nine jobs across the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura.

For additional information about the Port's response to COVID-19 readers are invited to visit:

www.portofla.org/covid19 For cruise information see: www.lawaterfront.org

Solving the crew change challenge

Seafarers are invisible victims of COVID-19. Thanks to local restrictions and logistical challenges, hundreds of thousands have been stranded at sea – marooned on vessels for, in some cases, months beyond agreed contracts. Here Inchcape Shipping Services explains how it combines a physical network with virtual transparency to solve problems, unite families and safely switch seafarers worldwide.

'Complexity and cost.' Feizel Mohammed doesn't waste words.

Speaking over a Team's link from his base in Singapore he doesn't have the time to. Inchcape's Global Sector Head, Ship & Crew Managers, has a busy evening at the office ahead and, by his reckoning, won't be home with his (slumbering) family until 0100.

So, when asked about the major challenges of facilitating crew changes this year compared to last, he gets straight to the point.

'Everything's changed,' he says and adds: 'In this global industry there's suddenly an explosion of local restrictions, complicating once relatively straightforward logistical operations or, in some cases, making them impossible. You need the local knowledge to understand what you can and can't do, the global perspective to find alternative solutions, and the flexibility to adapt.'

'It is very, very challenging.'

That seems, on the face of it, something of an understatement.

Radical change

If it was easy to change crews during the coronavirus pandemic we wouldn't have had the humanitarian crisis of, at one point up, to 400,000 seafarers stranded on vessels beyond contracted agreements.

It is anything but easy.

Ports open and close for crew changes without warning. Those that are open have their own quarantine rules and durations, with a variety of routines for transit to and from vessels, and varying demands for PCR testing, hotel stays, and different crew nationalities.



Buckeye Terminal pt 3 - ISS San Juan.

Photo by Angel Colon©.

Flight availability to and from hubs is, for the most part, radically different from pre-COVID times, making previously exceptional private charters a common, and expensive, solution. And, of course, a new breed of regulations has spawned an avalanche of paperwork.

But sometimes it is the little things that hit home.

'Minivans,' said Mohammed with a smile and continued: 'If we were facilitating a crew change of ten people at the start of the year we'd use one minivan. Now, due to safe

social distancing and hygiene protocols, we'd have three, with a maximum occupancy of four per vehicle. It goes without saying how much more expensive that is.'

As he made clear before – complexity and cost; the new crew change reality.

It's Inchcape's job to tackle it.



Safe hands

Inchcape Shipping Services is a global ships agency giant. With a history stretching back over 170 years, it is a firm that has lived through its fair share of global crises, none of which appear to have stymied growth.

Today it boasts over 240 offices, in 68 countries, covering around 2,500 ports, with approximately 3,000 staff scattered across key locations, supported by an army of carefully vetted suppliers. The services it provides encompass full cargo agency, to dry-docking, survey and inspection, financial management, bunker calls, and more – all with the promise of standardised levels of service, transparency, value and compliance.

In difficult times, Mohammed notes, it offers a safe pair of hands.

Of course, times don't get much more difficult for crew change – a key focus for the Singapore-based executive, who looks after the needs of some of the world's leading ship management companies, and their extensive fleets.

Luckily, he doesn't do it alone.



Big picture benefits

Manish Ranjan, Inchcape's Head of Vessel Supply Chain Hub, is also on the call from Mumbai. Mohammed's role is commercial – setting contracts, managing accounts and

building business – while Ranjan's is operational, fulfilling Inchcape's promises.



Manish Ranjan, Inchcape's Head of Vessel Supply Chain Hub.

And facilitating global crew logistics services (CLS) is, he explained, a key service and revenue generator even, it appears, this year.

'Given the various stages of lockdown around the world we have maintained a strong level of activity in key hubs such as Fujairah, Singapore, Houston, Hong Kong, Rotterdam (where we worked across the industry to establish a 'safe corridor'), Gibraltar, Panama, Egypt... basically most places where we have a strong office network.' he explained.

Although reticent to give exact figures, he imparts that annual crew change numbers were approaching six-figures last year. 2020, obviously, will be different, but he sees a fall of only around 20% - a quite staggering achievement under the circumstances.

That strong office network referred to has been key.

Ranjan commented: *'We can see the big picture. If a crew change is impossible in one port we can advise and facilitate it in another that complements vessel schedules and operations. If there is a 14 day quarantine requirement in one location, incurring significant hotel costs and inconvenience, we can plan to deviate to another where, for example, there might only be a five or seven day isolation, or none. And because we have people on the ground worldwide we have relationships with port authorities to understand their individual needs, know exact documentation requirements and, where necessary, lobby for special considerations in extreme circumstances.'*

'We always work to find a solution especially where there may be individuals with pressing or emergency needs. We believe there's no one better placed to help out.'

Moving mountains

Of course, usually it is not individuals that need to be signed on and off vessels, but entire crews... and sometimes for several vessels at the same time and it is here where a global network can really pay dividends.

Ranjan uses the example of one case in July where several ship management customers joined forces in a bid

to charter flights for 100 seafarers – from India and Sri Lanka – to fly into Gibraltar and relieve existing crews on numerous ships.

With only 48 hours notice Inchcape conducted an operation that saw teams across continents facilitating a crew consolidation in Doha, an overnight stay in London (where a hotel was persuaded to open for them), multiple transfers, hours of immigration negotiations at several airports, and the eventual arrival in Gibraltar, from where the process started again in reverse with a number of off-signing crew travelling back to India.

‘I’m not sure if it was fun,’ Ranjan said with a laugh, ‘but it was certainly a fulfilling challenge. It simply wouldn’t have been possible without the close internal collaboration of our international offices, using their physical presence and contacts on the ground to get things done.’

‘That kind of exercise build bonds. Not just between us as a company, but also between us and the customers, as partners. It creates a deeper sense of trust. I think that’s something we’ve really benefitted from during these trying times.’

Virtual support

Trust in Inchcape’s people and network has also helped the entire industry – whether customers or not – navigate the ever-changing landscape of local restrictions associated with COVID-19.

In March, Inchcape launched a COVID-tracker on its website, delivering a uniquely in-depth overview of evolving restrictions at major ports around the world. Combining official notifications of regulations with insights from local Inchcape people on the ground, alongside proprietary data, the tracker gives users a constantly updated picture of exactly what rules, restrictions and paperwork are relevant in any given location.

It is, Ranjan states, a way of regaining a sense of agency in an otherwise chaotic situation. He continued: *‘The real-time nature of the tracker gives key decision makers, both on the bridge and on shore, the ability to understand detailed requirements and, if necessary, alter operations to best meet objectives. It is, in short, a very powerful planning tool.’*

He reveals that, since launch, the online tool has been driving unprecedented traffic to Inchcape’s website, with a threefold growth in visitors from pre-COVID to the peak of the pandemic.

‘It demonstrates the value of the services we can provide,’ he added, noting, *‘and it would not be possible to do so if it wasn’t for our physical network of expert employees in each of these key locations. They’re real key workers.’*

As, of course, are the vessel crews themselves.

Dual duty

Mohammed rounds off the call by underlining his team’s commitment to them, but also to society.

He emphasised: *‘I believe, very strongly, that we have a dual purpose. Crews are under extraordinary pressure at present, and that impacts upon them and their families, but also on our customer’s shore-based staff that have to try and support them under exceptional circumstances. So, we have a duty to them, all of them, to help.’*

But we also have a duty to society. This pandemic has impacted upon everyone and the more we can control it, mitigating risk and limiting infection, the less damage, hardship and pain it will cause. We are doing everything in our power to stop any potential spread through crew changes – finding innovative solutions, yes, but also going the extra mile to ensure they are safe.”

If that sounds like hard work, it is – as evidenced by the late night lying ahead for the Inchcape executive – but he’s not complaining.

In conclusion he said: *‘I may be going home late, but I am going home. I want to make sure as many crews as possible round the world can do the same. There’s still work to be done.’*

ClassNK releases a new publication

Guideline for Survey and Facilities/Equipment of LNG Bunkering Ships



It was announced from Tokyo on 4 January that Classification Society ClassNK had released its *Guideline for Survey and Facilities/Equipment of LNG Bunkering Ships*. This document outlines the additional safety requirements of liquefied gas carriers that supply LNG fuel at sea.

The number of LNG-fuelled ships has been increasing in recent years as their CO₂, SO_x, and NO_x emissions have a lower environmental load compared to ships that use conventional oil fuels.

On the other hand, the infrastructure that supplies LNG as fuel from quayside facilities to merchant ships remains limited. Liquefied gas carriers supplying LNG fuel at sea are considered candidates for ensuring variations in fuel supply, and more liquefied gas carriers (LNG bunkering ships) that supply LNG to ships are now being built and operated.

There are currently no established international conventions for the facilities/equipment of ships that transfer LNG to other ships at sea, and additional safety equipment has been considered individually.

Based on examinations conducted so far, ClassNK has developed this Guideline which compiles the requirements for additional equipment for the safe transfer of LNG, a cryogenic substance, between ships, and surveys.

The Guideline stipulates the layout and system design of LNG bunkering ships, fuel transfer systems, and

operation, as well as class notations according to the equipment to be installed.

The Guideline is available to download free of charge via ClassNK's website at: www.classnk.com for those who have registered for the ClassNK My Page service.

To register for this service readers are invited to go to the ClassNK website and click on the My Page Login button.

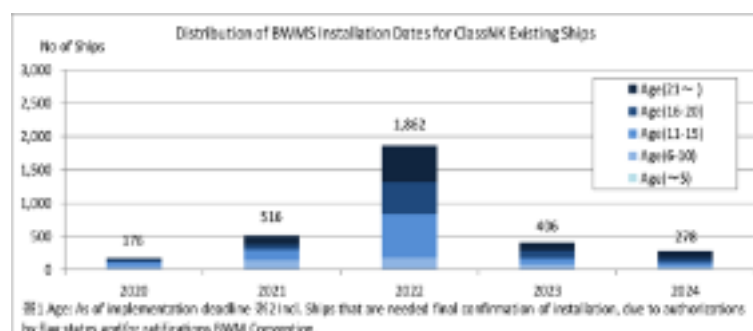
ClassNK advises existing ships to install early Ballast Water Management Systems

(Updated in January 2021)

ClassNK reported from Tokyo on 5 January of its work analysing the retrofitting status of ballast water management systems (BWMS) on its registered ships periodically since 2018.

This status has been updated based on the latest data and the classification society has confirmed that installation deadlines based on the BWMS Convention for many of its registered vessels are still concentrated in the year 2022.

As of the end of November 2020, 7,220 of the 9,159 vessels registered with ClassNK are obligated to install BWMS in accordance with the BWM Convention.



Among these vessels 3,982 have completed the installation, leaving 3,238 vessels that still require attention, it was reported. Although the number of vessels without BWMS has decreased by 1,280 since August 2019, the installation deadline for these remains largely concentrated in 2022.

As difficulties are expected in the installation of BWMS if all owners around the world wait until 2022, ClassNK has recommended installing well in advance. In addition, plan approval applications are also expected to concentrate during this period, therefore early application is strongly recommended.

It is recommended, too, by ClassNK that those who need to know refer to the technical information TEC-1086 for the guidance on BWMS plan examinations.

The TEC-1086 URL can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycts4kk7>

The latest information related to the BWM Convention and other technical information will be continuously provided through the ClassNK website to be found at:

www.classnk.com with the latest information of the distribution of BWMS installation dates for ClassNK existing vessels.

New ISWAN research

Benefits of regular social interaction on board

Regular social interaction on board benefits overall crew wellbeing, reduces isolation and stress and helps to build and motivate safe and efficient teams on board, new research shows.

Research findings by ISWAN¹ from Phase One of the Social Interaction Matters (SIM) Project were published on 5 January with the support of the (UK) Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and Red Ensign Group who sponsor the project.

Funding was administered through Trinity House, London.

Encouraging social interaction on board

The SIM Project was initiated with the primary objective of encouraging social interaction on board. This was achieved by conducting research that examined the relevant drivers and barriers to the promotion of social interaction and specific activities which seafarers around the world identified as helping to engage people. The project acknowledges the importance of crew coming together during their leisure time and the positive impact this has on wellbeing and operational efficiency and safety as a result.

Need for this project was recognised long before the widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the consequential crew change crisis placed even more importance on the need for strong crew cohesion. Connecting with others and time for hobbies and recreational activities are fundamental to wellbeing but this is challenging for seafarers who live and work on board for many months. Extended time on board has exacerbated these existing challenges and emphasises the value of strong relationships on board now more than ever.

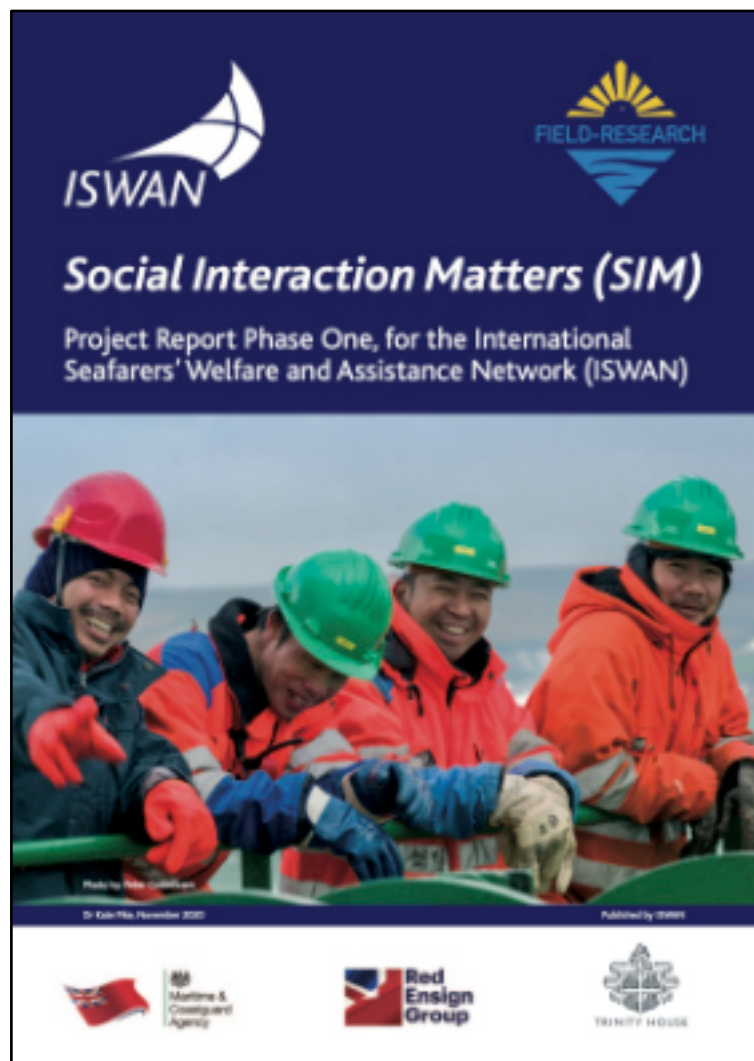
The project is divided into three phases with the report marking the end of Phase One.

Research consisted of a large survey of seafarers and other maritime stakeholders as well as ten in-depth telephone interviews.

Necessity of good leadership highlighted

Key research findings highlight the necessity of good leadership – which supports an inclusive and unifying on board culture – to encourage crew to interact comfortably together. Conversely, increased workloads and fatigue were identified as the biggest barriers to social interaction on board. Evidence also showed that many obstacles to social interaction are seen to impact on each other. For example, smaller crew sizes and increased workloads can lead to fatigue and isolation with seafarers simply not having enough energy to mix socially during their down time.

Dr Kate Pike, research lead and author of the report commented: *'Although measures can be put in place to facilitate recreational gatherings on board, it is these fundamental issues that need to be addressed for a long-term impact to take effect. Social interaction on board has a unifying impact that promotes a happier, more motivated crew that can work more effectively and safely together.'*



Continuing project

The project is still continuing but the report details many important lessons for shipping companies and ship operators. For example, the research shows that crew differences including nationality, gender and age should be considered in the planning of social activities as these factors can influence recreational preferences. It is therefore important for ship management to consider what engages and brings people together and to adapt suitable activities to their own company requirements. The research provides numerous examples of such activities and these can be adapted to accommodate most vessel types, voyage patterns, nationalities, and time constraints.

Ensuring that crew engage socially, even for small amounts of time every day, is vital and should be a priority on every voyage, however long, it is stated.

Katy Ware, Director of Maritime Services, also co-chairs the Red Ensign Group Conference and is the UK's Permanent Representative to the IMO. She said: *'Our seafarers provide a vital service, keeping the hearts of nations beating and we can't underestimate their role in*

our lives. They work in unique environments that can be both immensely rewarding and at times incredibly demanding on physical, mental and emotional health.

'The MCA works closely with seafarer charities and industry to understand the challenges faced by seafarers and to strive to make further improvements which could potentially have positive short and long-term impacts on the wellbeing of seafarers and is committed to spotting early signs of people who may require help as well as providing suitable support to ship owners, who owe their crew a duty of care under the Maritime Labour Convention.'

Building on these findings, ISWAN is working with a number of shipping companies interested in strengthening crew cohesion on their vessels to trial social engagement initiatives on board.

This will form Phase Two of the SIM Project. Following this, Phase Three will use the data and feedback from the trials to develop guidance for shipping companies in the form of a toolkit to be shared publicly. The toolkit will document proven successes, recommendations and ways to overcome challenges to social interaction on board, all with the end goal of happier, healthier, safer and more engaged crews on board.

Caitlin Vaughan, ISWAN Project Manager, added: *'We began this project at a difficult time for the industry so the widespread enthusiasm we have received from many different companies and seafarers about participating in the project is very encouraging. We are looking forward to building on the valuable findings in this research to ensure all companies recognise the importance of facilitating social interaction on board.'*

The full report is available for download here: <https://tinyurl.com/y64uu3qy>

There is also a summary of the key findings.

For more information about the Social Interaction Matters (SIM) project and Phase One research findings readers are invited to contact Caitlin Vaughan here: caitlin.vaughan@iswan.org.uk

¹ The International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network

Maritime New Zealand Annual Report 2019–2020

This 130-page annual report from Maritime New Zealand (www.maritimenz.govt.nz) outlines progress against the plans and measures detailed in the Statement of Intent and Statement of Performance Expectations.

The following is an extract from the introduction jointly authored by Jo Brosnahan, Chair of Maritime New Zealand and Keith Manch, Director, and is reproduced here by kind permission under Attribution 3.0 New Zealand (CC BY 3.0 NZ)

Being Effective in our Role

Maritime NZ has, over several years, been developing its approach as an effective evidence-based, intelligence-led, risk-focused organisation. At the beginning of 2019/20, the organisation received a significant boost in resourcing through a funding review, and made further progress in implementing improvements in capability and approach. Building on our core regulatory, compliance and response capabilities, these changes aim to strengthen work in areas such as:

- international engagement and influence;
- information systems;
- research and intelligence functions;
- communications and stakeholder engagement work; and
- our strategic framework and significantly refreshing it.

COVID-19

The improvements in capability contributed to Maritime NZ's quick response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We immediately established a response team and put a clear, structured leadership and communications approach in place to work effectively with the Ministry of Transport (MoT), the all-of-government (AoG) response and the maritime sector. This included seconding staff into core AoG response roles. Drawing on improvements made to our systems and capability, our people were seamlessly and rapidly able to adjust to lockdown requirements, especially as New Zealand entered Alert Level 4 on 26 March 2020. Within one day of the Government announcing the lockdown, and the health, safety and wellbeing of our people being of utmost priority, most of Maritime NZ's staff were working successfully from home.

During this time, the Maritime NZ Board met regularly on line in support of the organisation, while navigating the challenges of COVID-19. While in lockdown, staff explored different ways to deliver our work, including doing remote audits and training sessions.

Without undermining safety, security and marine protection outcomes, we engaged with the maritime industry in a way that was empathetic and enabling, adjusting regulatory requirements where appropriate. Like the rest of New Zealand, the pandemic has affected the funding of Maritime NZ. To address this, the Government put in place additional support to ensure agencies were able to maintain the delivery of core activities. With careful prioritisation and financial management (along with savings in areas such as travel) Maritime NZ did not need to access this fund during 2019/20.

What we achieved

Despite the pandemic, and not being in a position to achieve everything planned for the year, we made good progress with:

- reforming the 40 series rules that apply to the design, construction and survey of domestic ships;

- changing the International Maritime Organization's Polar Code II to improve the safety and environmental outcomes associated with small vessels travelling on polar waters;
- working with other regulators, unions and industry groups to effect longer-term change and improvement in areas such as recreational boating and port safety;
- preparing for the America's Cup;
- preparing for the audit by the International Maritime Organization of the way New Zealand implements international maritime conventions; and
- delivering a programme of assurance work in respect to our compliance activity.

The Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) and our maritime incident and oil spill response services, together with maritime officers and investigators, continued to be fully available. Recognising the financial impact of COVID-19 and the salary sacrifice arrangements put in place for parliamentarians and chief executives, each Authority member also committed to contributing a portion of their Board fees for the 2019/20 year to charity.



Thank you

This has been a year of challenges and it has required everyone to respond to uncertainty and change. We would like to recognise the absolute commitment and positive response from the whole Maritime NZ team, and the partnership and cooperation shown by the other government agencies and those we work with in the wider maritime sector.

Hē waka eke noa (We're all in this together)

To download the report readers are invited to see here: <https://tinyurl.com/y69j4o9t>

Operations in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea

Maritime security recommendations

Industry organizations have reminded ship operators and seafarers operating in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea to remain vigilant and listen for military warnings at all times.

On 5 January 2021, the Round Table of Industry Associations* jointly published a set of recommended risk mitigation measures for vessels operating in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. This was done in response to the 31 December 2020 incident, where a Liberian-flagged tanker identified the presence of a suspicious object, later reported to be a limpet mine, attached to its hull whilst conducting ship-to-ship (STS) operations off Iraq.

According to the Round Table document there was apparently no indication where or when the device was attached to the vessel's hull or who did this. It is also understood that officials from Iraq safely removed the device.

With the title *Industry update following incident in the Persian Gulf* the document provides valuable industry guidance as below.

Risk mitigating measures

Ship operators are recommended to review the *Best Management Practices (BMP5)*, see here: <http://www.ifsma.org/resources/BMP5-small.pdf> and consider sending the following guidance to vessels operating in the abovementioned region:

- **Undertake a new ship and voyage specific threat risk assessment before entering any region where there has been an incident, or the threat has changed.**
- After the risk assessment, review the Ship's Security Plan.
- **Review section 2 of BMP5, which outlines non-piracy threats.**
- Maintain a full and vigilant bridge watch. At night, slow small boats with no wake are difficult to spot on a radar.
- **Maintain a strict communication watch and establish communication with all vessels coming close. Do not allow small boats to approach or to come alongside. Use a searchlight for identification at night.**
- Ensure that strict boarding controls are in place.
- **Only lower accommodation gangways or ladders when necessary.**
- Rig outboard lighting where possible provided this does not interfere with keeping a safe lookout, particularly over the stern and rig and use searchlights if available.
- **Report any suspicious activity or objects immediately to both the port and the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO)** by telephone to: +44 2392 22060.**
- Monitor relevant VHF and other communication

channels.

- **Check that all fire-fighting equipment is available for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is being undertaken.**
- Keep the Automatic Information System (AIS) on. There is no need to complete the field stating the last or next port of call.

Conduct visual checks of the hull:

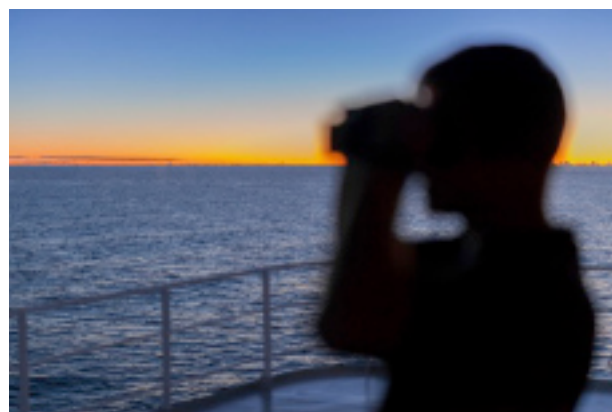
- **Undertake a visual search from the deck, all around the vessel to check for anything attached to the hull of the vessel. Particular attention should be paid to the hull at the waterline.**
- Conduct regular rounds and search the upper deck.
- **If a vessel detects anything unusual attached to the hull, then the Master should contact the UKMTO and Flag State immediately. All crew should be evacuated from the immediate area and mustered in a safe place. No attempt should be made to remove it.**
- The vessel should follow the advice of the military authorities.

If a vessel is alerted to suspicious activity while at anchor, the following additional measures should be considered:

- Rotate the propeller continuously or at short, irregular intervals.
- **Operate bow and stern thrusters at zero (0) thrust at irregular intervals.**
- Turn the rudder frequently.
- Switch the echo sounder to transmit to counter or combat swimmer/diver threat.

Additional sources of information can be downloaded from the **Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin, Arabian Sea** section of the Maritime Global Security website (<https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org>).

Reference is also made to being aware of **US MARAD updates to its Red Sea/Gulf of Aden security warning** of 21 December 2020 to be found here: See here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5dnh9zf>



About OCIMF

The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) is a voluntary association of oil companies with an interest in the shipment and terminalling of crude oil, oil products, petrochemicals and gas.

OCIMF focuses exclusively on preventing harm to people and the environment by promoting best practice in the design, construction and operation of tankers, barges and offshore vessels and their interfaces with terminals.

See also www.ocimf.org

*BIMCO; International Chamber of Shipping;
INTERTANKO; INTERCARGO and OCIMF.

**** United Kingdom Marine Trade Operations (UKMTO) is a Royal Navy capability with the principal purpose of providing an information conduit between military which (includes/security forces) and the wider international maritime trade. UKMTO delivers timely maritime security information, often acting as the primary point of contact for merchant vessels involved in maritime incidents or travelling within an area of high risk (HRA).**

UKMTO also administers Voluntary Reporting Areas (VRAs), as detailed in a variety of Maritime Security Charts. These schemes are to enhance the security of merchant vessels and therefore vessels/masters/CSOs and Companies are encouraged to send regular reports, providing their position/course/speed and ETA at their next port whilst in transit.

CHIRP Maritime

Confidential Incident Reporting

www.chirpmaritime.org

This is the UK confidential reporting programme for maritime incidents and aims to contribute to the enhancement of maritime safety worldwide. It provides a totally independent confidential (but not anonymous) reporting system for all individuals employed in, or associated with, this industry. The programme protects the identity of the reporters for their personal details are only kept for as long as the organisation needs to keep in contact with the reporter.

Incident reporting programmes have proved to be valuable tools in the identification of safety related issues and the definition of corrective actions. In the specific case of incidents involving human error, the availability of an independent, voluntary, confidential reporting medium has provided valuable additional information to that available through formal or mandatory reporting systems.

At CHIRP there is a corporate structure selected in order to provide a totally independent organisation, with management and fiscal responsibilities held by an independent Board of Trustees with extensive maritime experience.

To submit a report

CHIRP always protects the identity of its reporters. It runs a confidential programme and as such it only keep's reporters' personal details for as long as it is needed to keep in contact with them.

There is a report form on the website: www.chirpmaritime.org and reports can be submitted online, by e-mail to mail@chirp.co.uk or by post to The CHIRP Charitable Trust, One Kingdom Street, Paddington Central, London W2 6BD.

Each quarter CHIRP publishes a journal: Maritime FEEDBACK, and edition No 61 was reached in November 2020. The 2019 Annual Digest was issued earlier in the year.

Publications

MARITIME FEEDBACK



CHIRP publishes *MARITIME FEEDBACK* now up to issue No 61 (*illustrated here*). The editorial for this issue focuses upon a World Maritime University report regarding hours of work and rest in the workplace, and CHIRP would like to hear views on how to address this topic. The link to the report is given in the editorial.

This issue of *MARITIME FEEDBACK* also highlights a report related to distractions in the workplace which in this case proved to be expensive to say the least.

Other articles related to a near mooring breakaway, a flooding incident, working aloft, an un-manned jet ski, and a defective tug boat's winch.

There continues to receive many pilot-boarding related issues and while this continues CHIRP will continue to publish articles in the Pilots' Corner of the journal. Finally, it is reported that CHIRP has received some interesting correspondence related to anchor windlasses and overweight rescue boats, both of which will be promulgated further.

Other publications

CHIRP has published a series of papers looking at the impact of COVID-19 on seafarers and the shipping industry. The first paper highlights general medical advice for the seafarer in these extraordinary times and may be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxlux3c2>

The second paper written by Dr Claire Peckam of Safe Marine and a member of the CHIRP Maritime Advisory Board examines seafarer wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper may be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxvrfvuu>

This is essential reading since the welfare/psychological issues highlighted whilst focused upon COVID-19 are applicable to the industry at all times. The last paper highlights the plight of seafarers effectively trapped at sea on board vessels during the pandemic – the paper may be found here <https://tinyurl.com/y6bb7bwm>

On the CHIRP website there is an important publications page. It contains Insight Articles written by the CHIRP Maritime Advisory Board, and other papers from many organisations, relating to the Human Element, Safety Focus articles from *Safety at Sea*, plus other current safety related topics.

Funding

The Maritime Programme started in 2003, originally receiving UK Government funding, it is now funded through grants from The Corporation of Trinity House, The Lloyd's Register Foundation, Britannia P & I Club, Seafarers UK, UK P & I Club, TK Foundation and ITF Seafarers.

Inchcape shows strong leadership in response to cruise crisis

According to Inchcape Shipping Services Global Sector Head for the Cruise Industry, Grant Holmes: *'Inchcape has been ahead of the curve on key responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and to embrace change for a better future both for cruise lines and destinations.'*

Cruise industry veteran and entrepreneur Holmes joined Inchcape Shipping Services in 2014 tasked with developing a comprehensive cruise strategy to harness the company's global port agency network. He brought a wealth of international experience from tourism management and cruise operations, and running his own consultancy and training company.

Based out of Dubai, he spearheads Inchcape's global Cruise Solutions team, overseeing around 9,000 cruise calls per year as well as consultancy, shore excursion,

ground handling, surveying, crew logistics and bunkering services worldwide.

Here Holmes spoke about the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, his outlook for the industry and how ISS can support cruise lines and destinations going forward: *'2019 was one of the best years ever for cruise. And 2020 was widely projected to be even better year. Then came Covid-19 and by mid-March the pandemic had paralyzed the sector. Inchcape Shipping Services stepped up to repatriate passengers and help with technical calls.'*

With passengers safely home, Inchcape started crew repatriation working closely with cruise lines and port authorities, subsequently exploring possibilities for economical layup and anchorage on a global scale. Most ships have been dormant ever since, apart from some low-capacity blue cruises in Europe in the summer and fresh activity in Asia.



The 2,695-passenger Cunard flagship Queen Mary 2 (built 2003, refitted 2016) manoeuvring in the port of Valparaíso in Chile.

Photo: Inchcape ©.

Fluid situation

Most cruise lines are not planning to restart services until spring at the earliest given global health concerns, and most likely 2022 on any significant scale. Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) members determined a voluntary no-sail order until 31 December, but, as just stated, the actual start date will be later, and for US operators it will likely be Florida or southern states only in the beginning, with calls to private islands and perhaps the Bahamas, with limited capacity.

Cruise lines will need to pilot Covid-19 protocols to generate confidence, with an estimated 50% capacity initially. There will be quarantine for joining crew, social distancing, masks, crowd limitation and full sanitization. Robust HACCP- and USPH-based protocols were fortified since Norovirus was brought under control, so cruise operators are well prepared to go the extra mile on sanitation.

For destinations, the priority used to be security, but is now moving to health threats post-Covid-19. Those dependent on cruise tourism will have to build trust through strict protection measures. Protocols must be in place both for

port operations and excursions, including attraction sites and transportation means.

The Vanilla Islands Indian Ocean region* have asked Inchcape to develop a system of health management that can be applied to whatever potential cruising health threats emerge in future. Ship audits are also considered to be an essential element to maintain optimum preparedness.

Pent-up demand

Holmes believes consumer trust will return reasonably quickly, however 2021 will be a transitional year. He added: *'Cruise lines themselves did not lose trust. A significant number of passengers opted for vouchers instead of refunds for cancellations in 2020 – which extended up to 75% for niche operators – showing there is a lot of pent-up demand. Passengers on pilot cruises in the summer felt safe in their on-board bubble, but the biggest issue is travel itself and getting to the ship. With the constant generation of fear-based news in the mass media, people have been scared to leave their front doors.'*



Grant Holmes, Inchcape Shipping Services Global Sector Head for the Cruise Industry.

Photo: Inchcape ©.

Structural change

No one wanted Covid-19, but as with every crisis there is an opportunity. As an industry, cruise needs to seize it. The industry needs to reinvent itself, initially focused more on the allure of the sea, nature ashore in wide-open spaces, on-board offerings and private islands. Mega-ships should focus on private islands and marquis ports with sufficient capacity, and not over-crowd them, Holmes says.

Smaller destinations can be accessed by more sustainable niche operators in the Discovery, Luxury and Expedition sectors. There is a clear desire and trend to sail on smaller ships, which is evident in the growth of the Luxury and Expedition segments that offer a more customizable, personalised service, with unique opportunities for discovery in more remote places on Earth. Inchcape continues to help emerging destinations with operational compliance and advancing sustainable

solutions in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central America, the Caribbean, Africa and elsewhere.

Building cruise solutions

When Holmes joined Inchcape in 2014, his task was to develop a comprehensive strategy to harness Inchcape's global network. Although they had pockets of expertise, Inchcape were underutilized in cruise. He set out to understand cruise lines' commercial context, what they wanted and expected of a shipping agent. Industry contacts told him they wanted more than a standard agent – one that could provide greater business insight and help in developing itineraries and solving destination-based issues – which is why Inchcape have focused on the full gamut of Cruise Solutions.

It is understood that many agents are not always aware of the bigger picture, which makes Inchcape unique in its field. They have now grown from around 4,000 cruise calls in 2014 to approaching 10,000 calls in 2019 – representing around 10% of the global market.

Supporting lines and destinations

Inchcape are proactively developing leading-edge initiatives to support the industry in four key areas – sustainable cruise tourism development, holistic itinerary management (especially extended voyages and new destinations), crew logistics and business intelligence. Holmes believed this is a great formula. He commented: *'We have become the go-to company for anything out-of-the-ordinary and emerging markets, where I believe sustainable cruising has a promising future. We are literally developing new cruise markets for the first time in Africa, the Middle East and India, and then serving them.'*

Centre of Cruise Excellence

Inchcape's new Centre of Cruise Excellence (CoCE) will be launched in Q1 2021. The CoCE will be based in Mumbai, consolidating Inchcape's position in providing deep insight supported by the publication of weekly intelligence reports. The reports will feature everything from security warnings, health warnings, travel warnings, political reviews and port and marine updates to travel and tourism reports covering airports, airlines and holidays worldwide. The CoCE will include an itinerary management division, crew logistics management, cost control, feasibility, clearance, risk assessment and planning, as well as a hull survey and inspection service and measuring the quality/quantity of bunkering.

Inchcape have master mariners, technical professionals and teams that can cover multiple topics from marketing destinations, spacing in terminals for optimized operations to equipment and services provision. Grant pointed out: *'With global ISO compliance, nobody else in the cruise industry has this kind of footprint. Our intelligence and consultancy services can especially benefit more niche cruise lines that have recently downsized'*.

Disbursements process

Another rationale for setting up the CoCE was to build a best-in-class disbursement accounting (DA) process. Inchcape have streamlined the Cruise DA process to

make life easier for the cruise lines, which are somewhat nuanced in their accounting processes. Inchcape's approach is to apply the most efficient model possible for each respective cruise line regardless of size. They have trained their people accordingly, so they understand each line's invoicing, how to manage discrepancies and to ensure swift payment and cash flow.

Crew logistics hub

Building on their crew logistics expertise – Inchcape transferred 98,000 crew in total during 2019 across all shipping sectors – the new Inchcape Cruise Crew Desk provides a 24/7 hub service for logistics and support with a single point of contact. Covid-19 emphasized the need for immediate crew repatriation, which can be complex and involve multiple agents. Cruise lines with fewer people in the office may no longer have the resources to handle this. If it happens again, Inchcape have indicated that they can provide everything they need at the global scale – and are the only company doing it in such a way, targeting 60,000 crew transfers from the first year of launch.

Strong cruise culture

Inchcape's approach has changed massively over the last few years. They are now a strong cruise company with a strong cruise culture. They have dedicated cruise POCs (Points of Contact) in the Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific and MESAA (Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa) focusing on regional strategy. The CoCE's role is to ensure Inchcape delivers at a strategic level with consistency and full accountability.

Grant Holmes concluded by saying: *'Recovery is just a question of timing and I am optimistic for the future, especially for 2022 when we are likely to see a full recovery. There are plenty cruise fans out there who can't wait to get back on a ship. The key thing for our industry is to come back and get things right from the outset in regards to health management, operational efficiency and sustainability. Inchcape will be there all the way.'*

* Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Réunion island, Seychelles,

The UN mission to the SAFER oil tanker in Yemeni waters

Questions and answers

With regard to the SAFER tanker we reproduce here a Q&A article prepared by the UN news service

1. What is the SAFER oil tanker?

SAFER is a Floating Storage and Offloading (FSO) oil vessel moored off Yemen's west coast, approximately 8 kilometres (4.8 nautical miles) South West of the Ras Isa peninsula on the West coast of Yemen, permanently anchored at the same location for more than 30 years without any dry-docking or shipyard repairs.

The vessel was converted in 1986 from the single hull oil carrier *Esso Japan*, initially built in 1976, to FSO SAFER. SAFER is legally owned by the national oil company, the

Safer Exploration & Production Operation Company (SEPOC). Prior to the escalation of the conflict in 2015, the vessel was used to store and export oil from fields around Ma'rib. The *de facto* authorities in Sana'a have controlled the waters where the SAFER is moored since 2015.

2. What would happen if there is a spill or other disaster onboard the SAFER?

The tanker is reportedly holding nearly 1.1 million barrels of oil, which is about four times as much oil as spilled from *Exxon Valdez* in 1989. The aging tanker has not undergone regular maintenance since the escalation of the conflict in 2015. SAFER's structure, equipment and operating systems are deteriorating, leaving the tanker at risk of leaking, exploding or catching fire.

A spill would have catastrophic environmental and humanitarian consequences. Research by independent experts indicates that a major oil spill would severely impact Red Sea ecosystems on which almost 30 million people depend, including at least 1.6 million Yemenis. All the fisheries along the Yemeni west coast would be impacted within days and the livelihoods of the fishing communities would collapse, at a time when 90 per cent of these populations are already dependent on humanitarian aid. The shores of Hudaydah, Hajjah and Taiz will likely be the worst-hit. If fire erupts on SAFER for any reason, more than 8.4 million people could be exposed to harmful levels of pollutants.



Facilities at port of Hudaydah.

Photo per www.mot.gov.ye ©.

A worst-case scenario could lead to the immediate closure of the key port of Hudaydah, which is estimated to cause steep increases in the prices of food and fuel and hinder the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to millions of Yemenis. Yemen, particularly in the north, cannot afford the closure of Hudaydah port. Yemen imports about 90 per cent of its staple food and almost everything else, and so the majority of Yemenis heavily rely on imports to meet their basic needs. A majority of imports enter through Hudaydah. The risk of Hudaydah port closing is even more alarming at a time when Yemen is facing a renewed risk of famine, as confirmed by recent food security assessments. Overall, the economic cost of an oil spill from the SAFER tanker to Yemen fisheries could run to an estimated \$1.5 billion over 25 years.

Other Red Sea littoral countries, including Djibouti, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia, are also likely to be impacted. A spill could also debilitate one of the world's busiest commercial shipping routes through the Red Sea, which accounts for about 10 per cent of global trade.

3. What has the UN been doing to address the issue?

The United Nations has been seeking to deploy an expert mission to assess the condition of the tanker and conduct initial repairs for over two years. In August 2019, the United Nations deployed a team of experts to Djibouti, which was to serve as the staging location for the mission, based on agreement in principle from all parties. That mission was cancelled after the *de facto* Houthi authorities withdrew their approval the night before departure.

Negotiations with the *de facto* authorities in Sana'a have been ongoing ever since to deploy another mission. These discussions accelerated following reports of a leak of seawater into the SAFER engine room in May 2020. That leak was contained, but it is unclear how long the fix will last.

Since then, the United Nations has been engaging with the de-facto authorities to agree on a detailed Scope of Work for the proposed mission, which has three clear objectives:

1. To assess the condition of the SAFER oil tanker through analysis of its systems and structure;
2. To conduct urgent possible initial maintenance that might reduce the risk of an oil leak until a permanent solution is applied;
3. To formulate evidence-based options on what solutions are possible to permanently remove the threat of an oil spill.

The United Nations received a letter on 21 November 2020 from the *de facto* authorities in Sana'a officially signalling their approval of the Scope of Work. In light of this approval, the United Nations is now in a position to commence the logistical preparations for the mission, including by using donor funds to secure the technical experts and procure the necessary equipment. The Government of Yemen has expressed its full support for the proposed technical mission as well.

The deployment of the initial expert mission will not eliminate the threat of an oil spill from SAFER. The mission is designed to produce the needed assessment and generate evidence-based options to permanently address the threat posed by the tanker. The United Nations has no prejudgment as to the outcome of the assessment.

The technical experts will conduct light maintenance tasks in accordance with an agreed Scope of Work document, subject to having practical access, as well as environmental limitations, and other considerations regarding the personal safety of the mission's staff, upholding the integrity of the vessel and its systems, and other relevant factors.

In addition to working on the deployment of an expert mission, UN entities are also supporting contingency planning efforts aimed at strengthening readiness for assistance and response, should a spill occur.

4. What has changed since 2019?

The situation is now even more urgent than it was in 2019. On 27 May, seawater leaked into the engine room, threatening to destabilize or sink the vessel and to cause

a massive oil spill. It took the divers from the SAFER Corporation a total of 28 hours under water over five days to contain the relatively small leak through a temporary fix. This was a dangerous and a very difficult task and it remains unclear how long this patch may hold. The next incident might not be something that can be contained. The explosion in the port of Beirut serves as a tragic reminder of the cost of inaction.

The international community has been clearer than ever that it expects progress on this critical issue to be made, including at a special Security Council meeting dedicated to the SAFER on 15 July 2020. The mission will be deploying based on multiple rounds of constructive technical discussions with the *de facto* authorities and a detailed, mutually-agreed Scope of Work document.



Hudaydah port.

Photo per UNMHA / www.un.org UN ©

5. What is the Scope of Work document?

The Scope of Work is a mutually-agreed technical document that outlines in detail the objectives of the mission and the tasks the mission staff will undertake once on board the SAFER. It has been finalized following weeks of consultations with the de-facto authorities in Sana'a in an effort to ensure clarity and to avoid any misunderstandings that could lead to the mission's delay or cancellation later.

The Scope of Work was endorsed by the *de facto* authorities in a formal letter dated 21 November. This has provided the United Nations with the required confidence to start spending donor money and begin the ongoing procurement process for the specialized equipment needed by the mission. The Scope of Work document can be found at this link

6. What is the timeline for the mission's deployment?

As of late December 2020, the United Nations estimates the mission team can arrive on site by mid-February. However, the timing of deployment will depend on a number of factors including the market availability of the needed equipment and staff, shipping times and routes, transit weather conditions and funding availability.

The mission will continue to require facilitation as planning progresses including additional permits and authorizations to enable the mission's success. As such, the continued cooperation of all stakeholders, particularly the *de facto* authorities in Sana'a, will be a crucial factor in the timely deployment of the mission. The United Nations appreciates the commitments received from all stakeholders to continue this facilitation.

Reefer container monitoring on board vessels

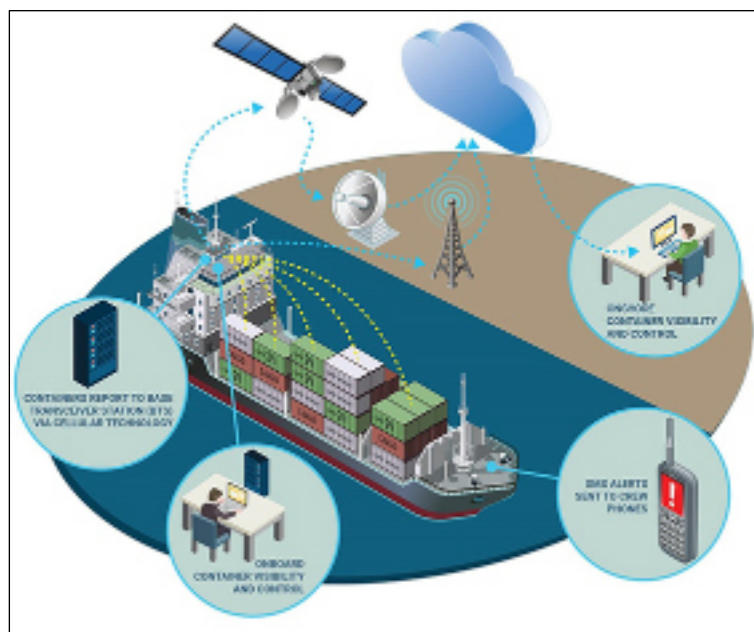
DCSA releases IoT standards for remote

Proper monitoring and handling of reefer containers is vital to maintain the quality of perishable goods during a passage. Reefer containers are embedded with an array of sensors connected to the reefer controller units, which grant access to all necessary control settings to ensure both the container and its perishable cargo can be monitored and managed. This was announced from the Netherlands-based Digital Container Shipping Association (DCSA) in mid- December 2020.

Vessel crew must physically check the reefer controller units many times during a voyage to ensure reefers are working properly and take corrective action if needed. This is a time-consuming, repetitive and a physical task that is subject to human error.

Now the DCSA has published the second release of its IoT standards initiative: *DCSA IoT Data Standard for Remote Reefer Container Monitoring on Board a Vessel 1.0*.

Developed in conjunction with member carriers, the DCSA standard defines a minimum set of data elements to be shared with the vessel crew to enable remote monitoring of smart reefer containers on board a vessel.



ORBCOMM's VesselConnect system enables end-to-end visibility of refrigerated containers transporting temperature-sensitive, high-value cargo at sea. For more details on this system readers are invited to see: www.orbcomm.com

Remote monitoring is feasible by way of IoT container devices that are able to collect data from the reefer controller units, process it and send these data elements to local servers and applications on board a vessel via the gateways on the vessel.

The DCSA standard is an important building block for interoperability and collaboration between stakeholders. Through this standard, DCSA creates the basis to enable reefer container IoT devices to send specified reefer container data over the local network to the onboard

server and applications. This allows vessel crew to monitor status information and alarms remotely. Automation of the reefer container monitoring process will be more efficient and less prone to human error, which will streamline operations on board the vessel. The vessel crew can be relieved from considerable manual workload and focus on managing exceptions.

DCSA standards can be downloaded at no charge from the Association's website here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y28oq5kf>

About DCSA

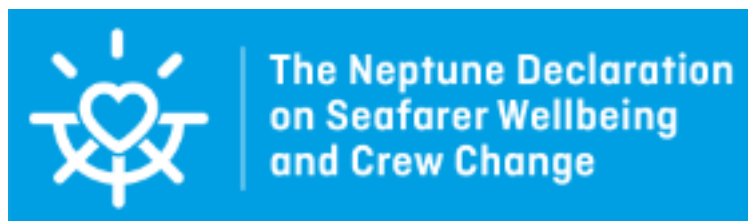
Digital Container Shipping Association (DCSA) is a neutral, non-profit group founded by major ocean carriers to digitise and standardise the container shipping industry.

With the mission of leading the industry towards systematic collaboration, DCSA drives initiatives to make container transportation services transparent, reliable, easy to use, secure and environmentally friendly. DCSA's open source standards are developed based on input from DCSA member carriers, industry stakeholders and technology experts from other industries.

DCSA member carriers include: MSC, Maersk, CMA CGM, Hapag-Lloyd, ONE, Evergreen, Yang Ming, HMM and ZIM.

The Neptune Declaration

Over 300 companies and organizations join forces to help resolve a humanitarian crisis on the world's ocean



Global industry and human rights leaders, including AP Møller - Mærsk, BP, BW, Cargill, COSCO, DOW, Euronav, MISC, NYK, Rio Tinto, Shell, Trafigura, Unilever and Vale, sign the Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change in a worldwide call to action to end the unprecedented crew change crisis caused by Covid-19.

Hundreds of thousands of seafarers from across the globe have been left stranded working aboard ships beyond the expiry of their initial contracts and are unable to be relieved since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. Fatigue after long periods at sea has significant consequences on the physical and mental wellbeing of seafarers. It also increases the risk of maritime incidents and environmental disasters, and poses a threat to the integrity of maritime supply chains, which carry 90% of global trade.

Despite significant efforts by international organizations, unions, companies and some governments to resolve this untenable crew change crisis we are starting to see the situation getting worse as governments bring in more travel bans in response to the new strains of the Covid-19

virus. A number of key issues leave this critical situation unresolved: national authorities around the world continue to see crew changes and international travel as a Covid-19 risk; high-quality health protocols are not being consistently implemented by ship operators; and the disruption of international air travel has reduced the number of flights between traditional crew change hubs and major seafaring nations.



More than 300 companies and organizations (*including IFSMA*) recognize that they have a shared responsibility based on their roles across the entire maritime value chain, and beyond, to ensure that the crew change crisis is resolved as soon as possible. They have signed the *Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change* that defines four main actions to facilitate crew changes and keep global supply chains functioning:

- Recognize seafarers as key workers and give them priority access to Covid-19 vaccines
- Establish and implement gold standard health protocols based on existing best practice
- Increase collaboration between ship operators and charterers to facilitate crew changes
- Ensure air connectivity between key maritime hubs for seafarers

For the Neptune Declaration see here: <https://tinyurl.com/y253szcx>

Some facts on shipping, please circulate widely:



According to the latest **Manpower Report** from ICS and BIMCO, the worldwide population of seafarers serving on internationally trading merchant ships is estimated at **1,647,500 seafarers**, of which 774,000 are officers and 873,500 are ratings. China, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are estimated to be the **five largest supply countries for all seafarers** (officers and ratings).

During normal circumstances, ICS estimates around **100,000 seafarers are rotated every month**, with 50,000 disembarking and 50,000 embarking ships to comply with

relevant international maritime regulations, governing safe working hours and crew welfare, so that they can continue to transport global trade safely.



At the height of the crew change crisis in the autumn of 2020, the UN International Maritime Organization estimated that around **400,000 seafarers** were on their ships beyond the expiry of their contract, while another 400,000 seafarers were unable to get to work.

Fatigue after long periods at sea has significant consequences on the physical and mental wellbeing of these seafarers. Physically, seafarers can often work 7 days a week and 10-12 hours shifts to man ships, performing tasks that require constant professional attention. They also typically work between four and six months on ships, followed by a period of leave. However, extensive periods at sea, in some cases, over 17 months, have become routine as a result of Covid-19 and increase the risk of accidents on board.

On 1 December 2020 United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for all countries around the world to designate seafarers as key workers and implement crew change protocols.



Progress on addressing the crew change crisis has been made through significant efforts by individual companies, international organizations, industry associations, labour unions, NGOs and some governments, but the situation is still not resolved as many seafarers remain stranded on vessels beyond the expiry of their contracts.

With the new Covid-19 mutations that spread more easily, some governments are introducing stricter measures on travellers in general and on seafarers and crew changes specifically, which can lead to a return to the untenable situation we saw last year.

Inability to crew change poses a significant threat to the integrity of maritime supply chains. Around 90% of global trade is transported by commercial shipping, which moves the world's food, energy and raw materials, as well as manufactured goods and components – including vital medical supplies and many products sold in supermarkets.