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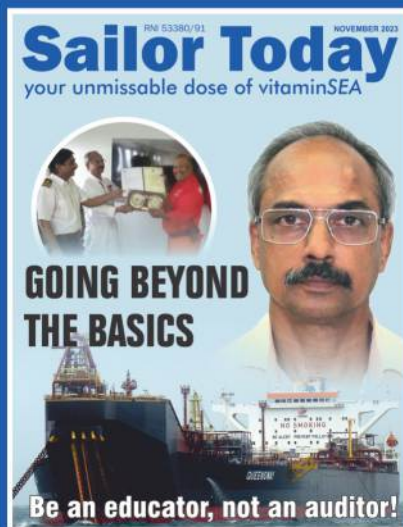
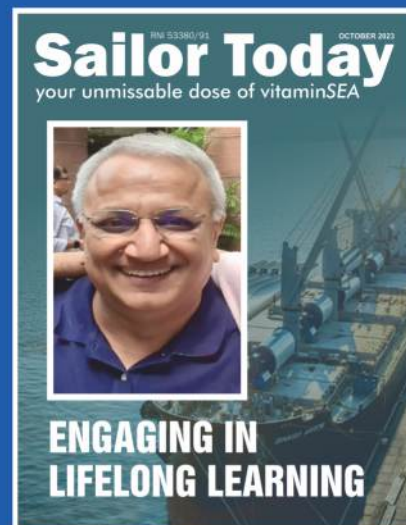
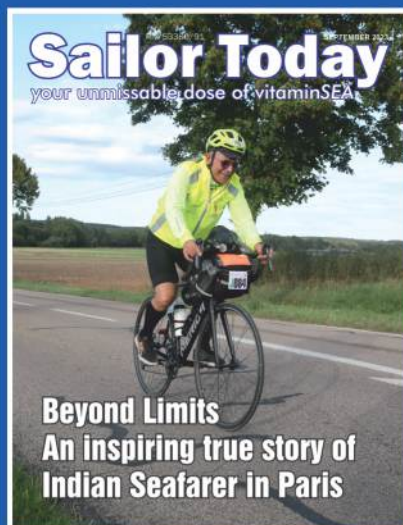
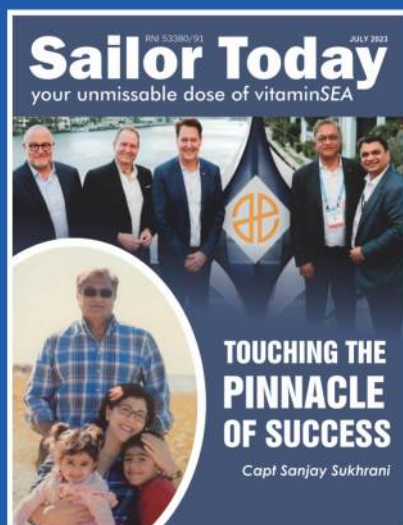
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COUNTERING THE DGS DRAFT ORDER ON VESSEL AGE NORMS: A DATA-DRIVEN CRITIQUE

By Capt. Ramji S Krishnan
Sloan Fellow, London Business School

ABSTRACT

The Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) Draft Order on Vessel Age Norms (May 27, 2025) seeks to modernize the Indian fleet and support IMO greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. While well-intentioned, a data-based analysis reveals that strict age limits risk significant economic, operational, and competitive disruption, with modest gains in safety or emissions. Empirical data—drawn from Indian Register of Shipping (IRS), DNV, and global fleet studies—suggests a shift toward performance-based regulation and incentivized vessel maintenance is preferable. Updated fleet age data (MoPSW 2024) confirms that, while rejuvenation is underway, the coastal fleet remains relatively old, challenging the rationale for a blanket approach.

INTRODUCTION

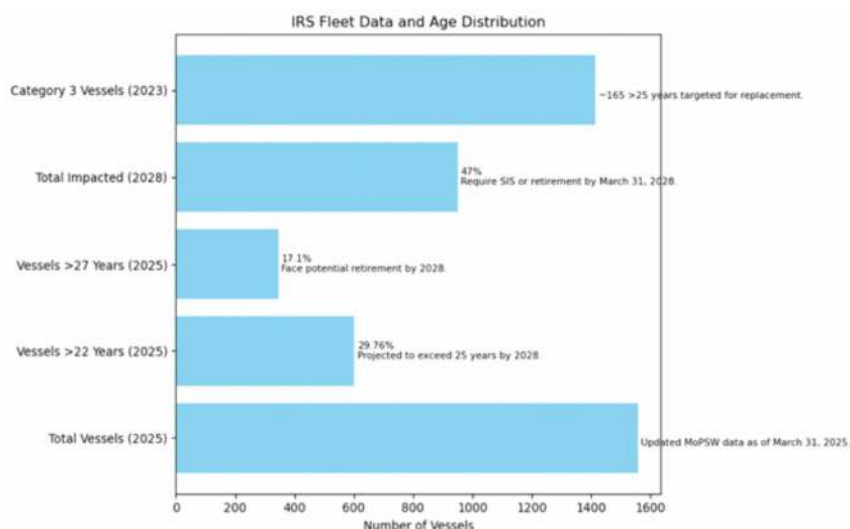
The DGS Draft Order proposes vessel age limits (generally 25 years, with stricter caps for second-hand or certain small vessels) to be enforced by March 31, 2028. While its ambition is clear, the implementation risks harmful short-term shocks across the fleet. By examining MoPSW and IRS data, as well as international studies, this policy critique argues in favour of alternatives such as targeted maintenance incentives and stakeholder engagement.

ECONOMIC BURDEN ON INDIAN SHIPOWNERS

The economic burden imposed by the DGS Draft Order on Vessel Age Norms is particularly acute for India's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the maritime sector, as well

"The development of individual policies will not greatly improve the current level of maritime safety, and more fundamental changes are needed in the governance of maritime safety." - (Kuronen & Tapaninen, WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs)

as operators of Category 3 vessels such as Offshore Supply Vessels (OSVs), Anchor Handling Tug Supply (AHTS) vessels, and tugs. These vessels are essential for coastal and offshore operations, yet the order's stringent age limits—25 years for general cargo vessels, 20 years for second-hand acquisitions, and varied thresholds for smaller vessels—threaten to upend their viability by mandating compliance by March 31, 2028. Recent data from the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) in its "Indian Shipping Statistics 2024" reveals the scale of the challenge: as detailed in Table 1, the Indian flagged fleet shows signs of rejuvenation but still faces widespread disruption under the policy.



This aging trend amplifies the order's projected impact: as shown in Table 1, nearly 47% (950 vessels) of the IRS fleet will be affected by 2028, with 602 vessels requiring expensive Sustainability Indexing of Ships (SIS) compliance to extend

operations and 346 facing outright retirement. For Category 3 vessels, which dominate coastal trade, the stakes are even higher—as per Table 1, ~165 of those over 25 years old are targeted for replacement at an average cost of \$5 million per vessel, totalling a staggering \$825 million (as detailed in Table 2). This figure is conservative, as actual costs vary widely: AHTS vessels range from \$6.8 million to \$18.7 million, and tugs from \$165,000 to \$4.3 million, making renewal an insurmountable barrier for SMEs with limited access to capital. Compounding the issue are surging market prices, with second-hand Suezmax tankers rising 76% to \$83 million between 2022 and 2024, and new-

build Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) escalating 50% to \$132 million since 2020—trends that reflect global shipyard backlogs and supply chain constraints.

For SMEs reliant on affordable second-hand acquisitions, the 20-year cap effectively shuts off viable options, forcing premature retirements or unaffordable upgrades. The rigid 2028 deadline

exacerbates these pressures, as global shipbuilding capacity is strained by demand for low-emission vessels, potentially leading to a drastic reduction in fleet size, escalated freight rates, and severe disruptions to critical supply chains, including oil and gas exploration. In

"Structural determinants of maritime transport costs are diverse and include both vessel and regulatory characteristics. Any abrupt regulatory tightening risks cascading impacts throughout smaller economies and the supply chain." (UNCTAD, Review of Maritime Transport 2021)

essence, the order's economic toll could stifle the very sector it aims to modernize, disproportionately burdening SMEs without adequate support mechanisms to facilitate a smoother transition.

TABLE 1: IRS FLEET DATA AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

This table reflects the IRS fleet composition and projected impact of the DGS age norms by 2028.

Category	Value	Notes
Total Vessels (2025)	1,558	Updated MoPSW data as of March 31, 2025.
Average Age (2025)	18.7 years	Average age from latest statistics.
Vessels >22 Years (2025)	602 (29.76%)	Projected to exceed 25 years by 2028.
Vessels >27 Years (2025)	346 (17.10%)	Face potential retirement by 2028.
Total Impacted (2028)	950 (47%)	Require SIS or retirement by March 31, 2028.
Category 3 Vessels	~1,415 (2023)	~165 >25 years targeted for replacement.

Source Attribution: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), "Indian Shipping Statistics 2024" (as of March 31, 2025); Email (June 22, 2025) sent to DGS by Capt. Ramji S Krishnan; Capt. Ramji S. Krishnan, "ARGUMENTUM A FORTIORI," Sailor Today (January 2023); IRS website – 2023 Data.

Detailed Explanatory Notes: The 47% impact (950 vessels) includes 602 needing SIS and 346 facing retirement. Category 3 data (667/920 in 2019, 631/876 in 2020) supports the ~1,415 estimate. Estimates are author-derived from IRS/MoPSW trends, reflecting a slight rejuvenation (40.0% >20 years, down from 46.1% in 2023) due to recent incentives and new builds, but persistent aging in coastal segments highlights the policy's potential overreach. This is based on the latest Ministry of Ports,

Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) "Indian Shipping Statistics 2024" report, which provides the mean (average) age of the Indian flagged fleet as 18.7 years as of March 31, 2025.

TABLE 1-A: AGE OF THE VESSEL (HISTORICAL IRS DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (PRE-2025))

Statistic	Value
Mean	16.70
Standard Error	0.214
Median	16.08
Mode	2.16
Standard Deviation	9.62
Sample Variance	92.59

Source Attribution: Email (June 22, 2025) sent to DGS by Capt. Ramji S Krishnan; Capt. Ramji S. Krishnan, "ARGUMENTUM A FORTIORI," Sailor Today (January 2023).

Detailed Explanatory Notes: These descriptive statistics provide a snapshot of vessel age variability in the IRS fleet, with a median of 16.08 years indicating a relatively young core but a high standard deviation (9.62) reflecting significant spread, including older vessels at risk under the DGS norms. The mode of 2.17 years suggests clustering around newer builds. The IRS data represents a sample or subset (e.g., specific vessel types or pre-update fleet), with a lower median/mean due to clustering around younger vessels (mode

"Global shipping industry decarbonization requires a just and equitable transition. Measures must consider cost implications for developing regions and smaller operators." - (UNCTAD, Review of Maritime Transport 2023)

2.17 years). The standard deviation (9.62) indicates high variability, skewing the mean higher than the median.

CLARIFICATION AND RECONCILIATION:

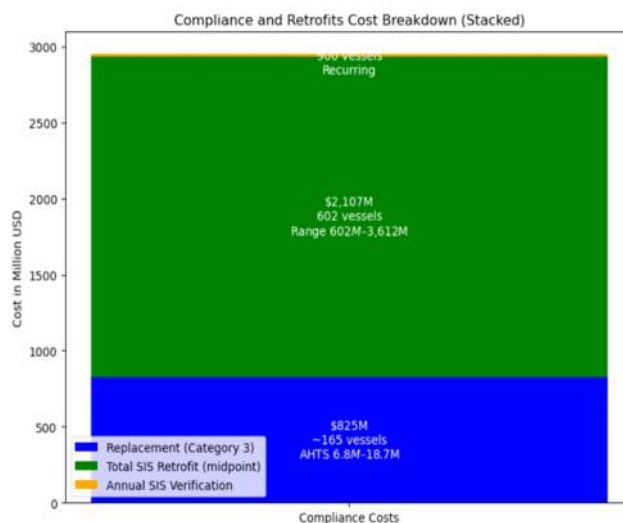
The MoPSW 18.7 years is the most current authoritative mean age for the full fleet (2025), superseding the older IRS sample (subset) in Table 1-A.

LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF COMPLIANT VESSELS

The limited availability of compliant vessels poses a critical challenge to the implementation of the DGS Draft Order, exacerbating the economic and operational pressures on Indian shipowners. Globally, the maritime fleet is undergoing a pronounced aging trend, with the average vessel age reaching 22.2 years according to UNCTAD's Review of Maritime Transport 2024, and over 50% of key types like Aframax tankers exceeding 15 years. As shown in Table 1, 40.0% of the fleet is above 20 years. New vessel construction lags significantly, driven by uncertainty in future fuel technologies amid IMO's GHG reduction targets—such as the shift to low-carbon options like methanol or ammonia, which require specialized designs and infrastructure that are not yet mature. This scarcity is particularly acute for Category 3 vessels (e.g., OSVs, AHTS, tugs), where ~165 over 25 years face replacement under the order (as per Table 1), yet compliant alternatives are neither readily available

nor affordable amid shipyard backlogs of 3–5 years (per Clarksons). As a result, the 2028 deadline could force premature retirements without viable substitutes, leading to a 20–30% capacity shortfall in vital coastal trade, escalating freight rates by 10–15% in affected sectors like oil and gas, and underscoring the need for flexible, market-aligned policies rather than rigid age caps that ignore real-world supply constraints.

ECONOMIC IMPACT



The financial ramifications of Sustainability Indexing of Ships (SIS) retrofits under the DGS Draft Order are substantial, imposing a severe burden on SMEs. The total SIS retrofit estimate of \$602–3,612 million is based on per-vessel costs of \$1–6 million applied to 602 vessels projected to require compliance by 2028 (as detailed in Tables 1 and 2). The \$1 million low end covers basic EEXI modifications (e.g., engine power limitation, \$100,000–\$1 million per vessel, per LR and DNV, 2025), while the \$6

"International conventions such as SOLAS and MARPOL favour performance-based standards and continual improvement over arbitrary age norms. Prescriptive regulation is less adaptive to real-world fleet conditions." - (WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs)

million high end includes full SIS upgrades like scrubbers (\$2–4 million) and shore power systems (BV). Annual verification adds \$18 million for ~900 Indian-flagged vessels, at ~\$20,000 per vessel (as per Table 2). Consequently, the policy could reduce the fleet by 20–30% (as noted in Table 1), raising freight rates 10–15% in coastal and disrupting oil/gas logistics. This highlights the urgent need for subsidies and performance-based alternatives to balance sustainability with economic viability.

TABLE 2: COST ESTIMATES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DGS AGE NORMS

This table details the financial implications of replacement and SIS compliance.

Cost Type	Estimate	Vessels Affected	Notes
Replacement (Category 3)	\$825M (~\$5M/vessel)	~165	
SIS Retrofit Costs	\$1M–\$6M/vessel	602	Range for scrubbers, EEXI, etc.
Total SIS Retrofit	\$602M–\$3,612M	602	
Annual SIS Verification	\$18M (~\$20K/vessel)	900	Recurring cost for compliance.
Market (Suezmax)	\$83M (76% rise)	N/A	2022–2024 second-hand price.
Market (VLCC New Build)	\$132M (50% rise)	N/A	Since 2020; 5-year-old at 83% (\$109.6M).

Source Attribution: Email (June 22, 2025) sent to DGS by Capt. Ramji S Krishnan; Capt. Ramji S. Krishnan, "ARGUMENTUM A FORTIORI," *Sailor Today* (January 2023); DGS Draft Order (May 27, 2025); Author Calculations.

Detailed Explanatory Notes: Total costs (\$825M–\$4.4B) reflect replacement and SIS, risking freight hikes. Estimates are author-derived from market trends, incorporating

recent surges (e.g., Suezmax 76% rise tied to global supply constraints, per UNCTAD reports). The \$825M figure for Category 3 assumes conservative averages, but variability (e.g., AHTS up to \$18.7M) could push costs higher for specialized vessels.

SAFETY: MAINTENANCE OVER AGE

Empirical data from a 1993–2008 study of 130,000 vessels shows well-maintained older ships safer. Indian FSI detentions average 12/year for >20 years vs. 63 for <20 years. DNV reports a 5% to 2% global casualty drop despite aging fleets.

TABLE 3: SAFETY STATISTICS FROM STUDIES

This table compiles incident and detention data to support the maintenance-over-age argument.

Study/Source	Data Point	Value	Period	Notes
130,000-Vessel Study	Vessels Analyzed	130,000	1993–2008	Sailor Today; older, maintained ships safer.
Casualties (>25 Years)	Proportion of 21,746	~33% (7,176)	1993–2008	Sailor Today; high for cargo/passenger.
Global Casualty Ratio	Incident Rate	5% to 2%	2012–2021	DNV; despite 16% vessel, 46% DWT increase.
Indian FSI Detentions	Total/Year	22	2012–2021	Sailor Today; ~12/year >20 years.
Detentions (<20 Years)	Vessels	63	2012–2021	Email, Article; vs. ~12/year >20 years.
DNV Incidents (Maintenance)	Cause of 42% Increase	60%	2014–2024	Email, Article; not age-related.

Source Attribution: Email (June 22, 2025) sent to DGS by Capt. Ramji S Krishnan; Capt. Ramji S. Krishnan, "ARGUMENTUM A FORTIORI," *Sailor Today* (January 2023); DNV, "Maritime Safety Trends 2014–2024."

Detailed Explanatory Notes: Incident rates (5–7 cargo, 2–3 passenger, 3–5 tankers) are estimated from industry trends. IACS/non-

"Well-kept older ships can demonstrate safety performance equal to, or better than, younger vessels—policy must recognize the primacy of maintenance over mere chronological age." - (Sailor Today, Jan 2023 and DNV Maritime Safety Trends, 2014–2024)

IACS variability (Sailor Today, Ship Safety Index) isn't quantified here but is noted in Para 11. The 130,000-vessel study counters age-safety assumptions, while DNV's 5% to 2% drop (despite fleet growth) emphasizes maintenance's role over age restrictions.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEASIBILITY AND EMISSIONS ANALYSIS - CO₂

EMISSIONS DATA

India's fleet contributes 0.7% of global shipping emissions (5.1M tonnes in 2019). Older vessels (0.97M tonnes) and Category 3 (0.908M tonnes) are negligible globally (0.14% and 0.13% of 706M tonnes). Replacement yields 0.072M tonnes reduction, insignificant. Alternative fuels face infrastructure lags.

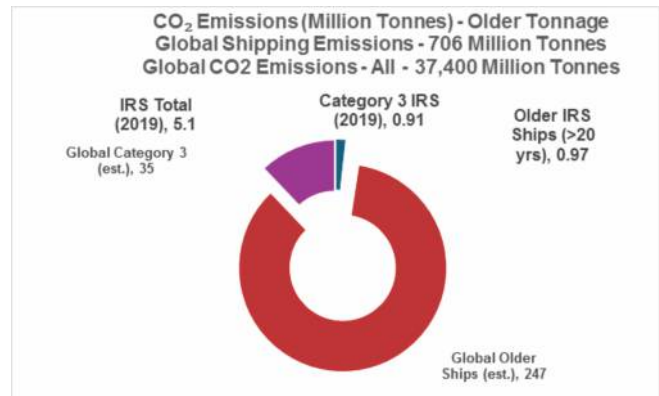
TABLE 4: CO₂ EMISSIONS DATA

This table compares IRS emissions with global figures.

Category	CO ₂ Emissions (tonnes)	% of Global Shipping (706M tonnes)	% of Total Global (37,400M tonnes)	Notes
IRS Total (2019)	5.1M	0.72%	0.0136%	Reduced to 4.62M in 2020.
Older IRS Ships (>20 yrs)	~0.97M	~0.14%	~0.0026%	~47% of 2,023 vessels.
Category 3 IRS (2019)	0.908M	~0.13%	~0.0024%	18.6% in 2020 (0.859M).
Global Older Ships (est.)	-	30-40%	0.57-0.75%	Based on >50% fleet >15 years.
Global Category 3 (est.)	~35M	~5%	~0.09%	Based on low GT share.

Source Attribution: Email (June 22, 2025) sent to DGS by Capt. Ramji S Krishnan; Capt. Ramji S. Krishnan, "ARGUMENTUM A FORTIORI," *Sailor Today* (January 2023); UNCTAD Maritime Review 2024; IMO Fourth GHG Study (2020).

Detailed Explanatory Notes: Global estimates are derived from UNCTAD (22.2-year average fleet age) and IMO data. The replacement benefit (0.072M tonnes) is minor relative to global totals, highlighting the policy's limited environmental impact. Category 3's 0.908M tonnes (2019) is a small share, supporting arguments for maintenance over replacement.



SIS COMPLEXITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Sustainability Indexing of Ships (SIS) is a mandatory system introduced in the DGS Draft Order (Para 19), designed to assess vessel sustainability based on 17 criteria, with a maximum score of 125 points. Ships exceeding age limits (e.g., 25 years for general cargo) must achieve at least 65 points for extensions beyond 2028. While conceptually aligned with IMO's GHG reduction goals, SIS poses significant practical challenges for implementation, particularly for SMEs. SIS requires substantial investments in technologies like scrubbers (for SO_x reduction), Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI) retrofits, shore power readiness, low-carbon fuels, and

"Smart regulations succeed in shipping when they match the industry's operational reality, recognizing constraints faced by small and medium enterprises in compliance and investment." - (ScienceDirect, Smart regulations in maritime governance)

NOx/PM emission controls. Costs for scrubbers range from \$2–6 million per vessel (as per Table 2), straining SMEs with limited capital. Annual verification for 900 Indian-flagged vessels adds \$18 million industry-wide (\$20,000 per vessel), burdening DGS resources (already handling ~10,000 IRS surveys/year) and risking delays or inconsistencies. This could overwhelm classification societies and lead to market consolidation, disadvantaging smaller operators. The system aims to incentivize sustainability but overlooks SME constraints. For instance, retrofitting for EEXI compliance (\$100,000–\$1 million) involves engine modifications or devices like variable frequency drives, which require technical expertise SMEs may lack. Delays in verification could ground vessels, impacting trade. Overall, SIS's complexity may hinder rather than help decarbonization without support like subsidies.

FAIRNESS AND EXEMPTIONS

The Draft Order selectively exempts passenger vessels, dredgers, and specialized units (e.g., FSRU, FPSO) from age norms (Para 11), subjecting them only to SIS, while imposing rigid limits on cargo, tankers, and Category 3 vessels. This lacks transparent data, favouring larger operators and creating inequity. Cargo ships face higher incident rates (5 per 1,000 ship-years) than passenger ships (2), per industry benchmarks, yet cargo owners bear stricter norms and costs. Tanker owners incur similar burdens without clear

justification, as their risks (~3–5 incidents) don't exceed exempted types. With ~950 IRS vessels impacted (as per Table 1), exemptions risk market consolidation, where SMEs (predominant in cargo/tankers) suffer while larger operators (often in exempted categories) gain. The DGS may assume passenger ships' lower rates or specialized units' complexity justify exemptions, but Sailor Today (Jan 2023) notes high casualties for passenger vessels, contradicting this. Without vessel-specific data, this appears arbitrary, potentially violating fair competition principles. It disadvantages coastal operators, undermining the order's equity.

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

IMO avoids arbitrary age limits, emphasizing performance-based standards like SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea), MARPOL (Pollution Prevention), EEDI, and CII. India's stricter norms (e.g., 25 years for general cargo, 20 for second-hand) disadvantage operators, as competitors retain well-maintained older vessels. Second-hand VLCC prices are 83% of new builds (\$132 million), forcing Indian replacements while rivals optimize fleets. This elevates costs, reducing market share in a global industry where IMO focuses on outcomes (e.g., CII ratings A-E for operational efficiency). IMO's approach allows flexibility for decarbonization, but India's caps self-impose burdens, ignoring studies showing older ships can be safe/efficient with maintenance. Competitors in regions without age norms

***"Transparency and stakeholder engagement are crucial for maritime policy effectiveness; opaque processes risk undermining credibility and compliance."
(Monitoring and evaluation of maritime spatial planning – ScienceDirect)***

gain edges, harming India's fleet (see in Table 1).

OPACITY OF THE IIM INDORE REPORT

The Draft Order relies on an undisclosed IIM Indore report (Para 8) for age-safety/emissions links, preventing verification and contrasting peer-reviewed studies emphasizing maintenance. Studies like the 1993–2008 analysis of 130,000 vessels (as in Table 3) show maintained older ships safer, and DNV links 60% incidents to maintenance gaps, not age. Without public access, stakeholders can't scrutinize methodology or data, undermining evidence-based policy. Transparency is crucial for trust; opacity risks flawed assumptions, as global data (e.g., 5% to 2% casualty drop despite aging fleets, per Table 3) contradicts age-focused norms. Releasing the report or commissioning peer-reviewed alternatives would address this.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Instead of rigid age limits, adopt progressive measures for safety/environmental goals without crippling the industry.

- **Performance-Based Regulation:** Implement rules focusing on key performance indicators (KPIs) like Port State Control (PSC) detention rates, historical casualties, and compliance with EEDI/CII. PSC involves inspecting foreign ships in ports to verify international
- **Maintenance Incentives:** Support regular maintenance and energy-efficient retrofits via subsidies/tax breaks. Retrofits like scrubbers (\$2–6M) or hull coatings reduce emissions 25% via better efficiency. Incentives offset costs for SMEs, promoting sustainability without forced retirement.
- **Operational Measures:** Incentivize slow steaming (20–30% fuel reduction per 10% speed decrease). Slow steaming lowers fuel use/emissions (up to 60% CO₂ reduction at 12–19 knots vs. 24 knots), with benefits outweighing voyage time increases (e.g., \$34/ton CO₂ saved). It's viable for containerships, reducing global emissions 20% at 10% speed cut.
- **Engagement:** Consultations with IMO and other reputed NGOs by Q3 2025. The DGS should lead consultations starting Q3 2025 (July–September) to refine

"A regional approach that combines risk assessment with stakeholder input—and focuses on actual risks rather than blanket prescriptive rules—delivers tailor-made, effective safety measures and enhances trust." - (WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs)

policies. Engage IMO for global standards alignment (e.g., no age norms, focus on EEDI/CII). Stakeholders include shipowners, operators, SMEs, classification societies (e.g., IRS), ports, and environmental groups. This collaborative process ensures evidence-based revisions, addressing opacity and inequities.

To forge a resilient future, the DGS should embrace performance-based regulation, incentivize retrofits and operational efficiencies like slow steaming, and engage stakeholders—including IMO—by Q3 2025. Such a shift would deliver genuine modernization, balancing economic viability, equity, and environmental progress for India's mercantile marine.

CONCLUSION

The DGS Draft Order, though driven by commendable goals of safety and sustainability, is poised to impose undue economic hardship on India's maritime sector, with projected costs exceeding \$4.4 billion (as per Table 2) for minimal environmental or safety return. As MoPSW data reveals a fleet that is gradually rejuvenating (as detailed in Table 1), the policy's rigid age limits overlook evidence from studies like the 130,000-vessel analysis and DNV reports (as in Table 3), which emphasize maintenance over chronological age as the true driver of outcomes. Moreover, the inconsistencies in exemptions for passenger vessels and dredgers, coupled with the targeting of cargo and tankers, introduce inequities that could erode competitiveness without clear data to justify them.

The publication serves as a canvas for diverse opinions; however, the responsibility for these views rests solely with the respective authors.

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THE SHIP DOCTORS, THE UNSUNG HEROES

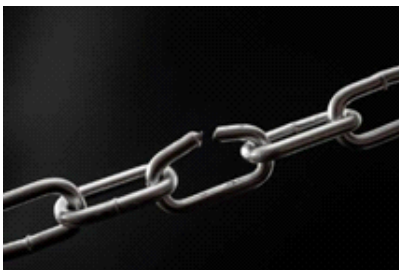
- Capt. Robert Vaz, Chief Operating Officer, Navguide Solutions

"A chain is only as strong as its weakest link," and in the

marine industry, we have multiple links that form the chain. From the hardware and the ship's crew to managers, charterers, owners, and various authorities, each plays a vital role in ensuring the vessel runs smoothly. However, sometimes the hard work of some may go unnoticed; these are the people I refer to as the **Ship doctors**. Like any situation, there are two sides to every story. In this brief article, I aim to highlight some of the challenges these Ship doctors face.

Mr. Jackson has just arrived after conducting technical inspections on three ships in West Africa. As usual, he places a box of chocolates in the pantry and is about to take his seat when the Technical Director calls him and says, "Good job, Jack, but tonight you have to leave as the 'Grand Lady' is detained in port for suspected oil pollution." Jack simply nods and leaves.

The Managing Director calls Capt. Singh, who is on a conference call with the owners, who are very upset because during a PSC inspection in China,

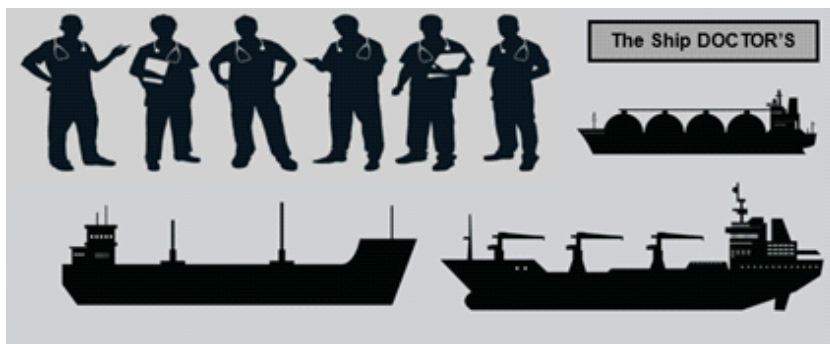


their vessel, the "Morning Star," was detained, and Capt. Singh returned from this vessel a week ago.

Mr. Jackson returned to his table and switched on his computer. He looks after six

ships, but he was out of the office for almost a week and was checking mail intermittently. Suddenly, he receives a call from the Master of one of the vessels, who is very upset that Mr. Jackson has not been replying to his emails and has never taken his calls. Their vessel is heading to New York, and they are expecting a US Coast Guard inspection.

Well, by now you guessed it right; I'm referring to the technical superintendents and the safety superintendents as the ship's doctors. Like the ship staff, they too have their limitations and challenges, and it is



vital to understand their roles as well before jumping to conclusions or making blanket statements about all superintendents.

After sailing for almost 20 years and spending over 15 years in the office, working in various roles such as Marine Safety Quality Superintendent, DPA, onboard tainer, and conducting inspections and onboard audits, taking over vessels, handing over vessels, and gaining shipyard and dry dock experience, I present these few scenarios that are part and parcel of most superintendents. Honestly, nobody really cares or bothers about this, as this is part of the job.

Visualise these scenarios and see if you



could relate to them.

- Travel for two days and reach a vessel. You have approximately 12 hours to conduct an inspection, which includes checking ballast tanks, entering holds or cargo tanks, doing a round of the vessel, and completing the inspection. You also need to discuss this with the ship's staff and complete the necessary appraisals. As if that wasn't enough, within the next 3 hours, you have to board another vessel. This is quite common for vessels calling at Singapore, Fujairah, etc., or in cases

where the Superintendent has to fly to a particular region, such as West Africa or South America, to cut costs. In these instances, he would inspect 2 to 3 ships.

- Despite all your efforts, including arranging for the ship's spares, talking to local agents and clearing agencies, the ship is diverted to the next port at the last minute.
- You are in dry dock and under pressure because your vessel must leave within the next 24 hours for a scheduled charter. However, you are encountering issues with some machinery, or rain has prevented finishing the ship's side painting, or the technician scheduled to fix a main engine problem canceled at the last minute. The owner and charters are calling you every few hours for updates. Can you imagine the immense stress that the superintendent endures?
- You identify serious issues in the engine room and on deck, as well as some inconsistencies in documentation. You bring these to the attention of the ship staff, who promise to address them within a few days. You leave the vessel to attend to another assignment. However, the ship staff overlook what you pointed out. Later, the same issues are found by a PSC inspector, leading to the ship being detained.
- You are out of the office, and all your emails have accumulated. Requisitions are awaiting review, and various paperwork in the office is incomplete.

Your technical assistant has brought a large file with several circulars and bulletins to examine. Three ships have sent their safety and management meeting reports for review and have also sent a couple of reminders. Additionally, the technical assistant wants to schedule some important meetings.

- You return to the office after visiting two vessels, and you need to complete the reports, organize hundreds of photographs, input all the data, and review all the photocopies of the documents you brought along; this in itself is very time-consuming.
- You supposedly have a shore job, but most of the time (24x7), you keep getting WhatsApp messages from the ship staff, your office team, and your charters/owners, as they are in different time zones. Sometimes, you get calls in the middle of the night and have to answer them.

In the marine industry, we often discuss rest hours, mental health, and physical health of seafarers, but we rarely acknowledge the superintendents who travel nonstop, eat unhealthy foods on the go, neglect their health, and cope with the ongoing demands of their jobs. Notwithstanding the stress they face during ship inspections, detentions, or incidents, they also work around the clock to resolve issues and keep the ships moving.

To address this practical issue at Navguide Solutions, we focused on and successfully solved some of these problems with our “Guide2inspections” app. Valuable time is

saved when writing reports, selecting, formatting, and inserting photographs, as the app handles all these tasks instantly. The report, including findings and photographs, can be sent immediately after the inspection. Photographs are automatically compressed, so the file size doesn't become too large when exporting. The questions in the app can be customized, streamlining the process and preventing duplication.

The superintendents and ship staff must have a strong bond, mutual respect, and trust each other to complete a job, as I mentioned at the start: ***“A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.”***

CONCLUSION

We all share a common goal: ensuring our ships are managed and operated safely, our crew completes their contracts safely, and everyone returns home to their loved ones. Our ships operate at peak efficiency, and together we protect the environment, making sure our maritime industry causes no harm.

Indeed, as regulations become more stringent regarding the welfare, social, mental, and physical health of our seafarers, we must also recognize the efforts of our superintendents, who, despite all limitations and challenges, do their best to ensure their crew's well-being and the safety of their ships.

Let us work as a strong team, supporting, encouraging, and respecting each other. In our capacities, let us take pride in being part of this global trade that delivers to the world.

- Bon voyage.

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London International Shipping Week Launches First-Ever 'BUNKER PARTY' to Celebrate Global Marine Fuels Industry



THE BUNKER PARTY

Monday 15 September

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For the first time in its 12-year history, London International Shipping Week is introducing The Bunker Party, a networking event aimed at bringing together those who work in, or with, the international marine fuels sector.

The inaugural Bunker Party will take place on Monday 15 September, on the first day of LISW25. It is already on course to attract over 400 bunker suppliers, traders, brokers and buyers – as well as fuel testing agencies, storage and terminal operators, barging and fuel trucking companies and other bunkering specialists, including lawyers, insurers, credit rating agencies and others dedicated to this truly global industry sector.

The Bunker Party, to be held at The Steelyard, an amazing venue under the Victorian arches beneath Cannon Street station in the heart of the City of London, is a free-to attend event but restricted to those who work in the industry.

It is co-hosted by ship energy and IBIA – the International Bunker Industry Association and co-sponsored by Drew Marine, Island Oil, Propeller Fuels, Range Shipping and

Spotbarge, with more co-sponsors expected to come on board before the start of LISW25.

Alexander Prokopakis, IBIA's Executive Director, said: "As bunkers continue to take centre stage in the global maritime dialogue, IBIA is proud to support London International Shipping Week and co-host the first-ever Bunker Party. This collaborative initiative reflects our commitment to strengthening industry engagement and driving progress through collective action."

Llewellyn Bankes-Hughes, CEO of ship energy and joint-founder London International Shipping Week, said: "I have been very closely involved in the bunker industry since 1980 and it gives me great pride to have been able to include, for the first time, an evening dedicated to the global marine fuels industry. It is an honour to be co-hosting the event with IBIA who, along with the supporting sponsors, will be inviting their members and closest contacts to join us for an evening of celebration. This invitation-only event promises powerful networking, serious socialising, and a memorable kick-off to the week's festivities."

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STEPHEN AND LOULLA BOND RETURN TO THE MARITIME INDUSTRY WITH MARINE MEDIA ENTERPRISES AND A RENEWED MISSION TO GIVE BACK

Stephen and Loulla Bond happy to be back in the maritime industry again

Maritime training pioneer Stephen Bond, the original founder of Videotel, has returned to the global shipping industry. Videotel, which became one of the most well-known and respected names in maritime training, was acquired by KVH following years of success.

Now, Stephen Bond is back, this time with his wife and long-time business partner Loulla Mourouris Bond, to officially bring Marine Media Enterprises and its Donate and Train scheme to market, combining industry knowledge with a new purpose.

The company has already been active through a soft launch, but now steps more fully into the spotlight with its Donate and Train initiative. This innovative scheme enables companies to provide their seafarers with access to high-quality video material, produced with the involvement of industry experts, that have a focus on social topics in addition to traditional safety training.

The novel structure of this scheme also

assists subscribing companies to meet their ESG objectives. In addition to the social benefit of informing and educating their seafarers, the scheme has a charitable element.

Twenty-five percent of the subscription is donated to a charity of the subscriber's choice, and there are charities that have already benefited significantly from this aspect of the scheme. The annual subscription is also modest - typically less than the cost of a cup of coffee per vessel per day per year.

"This is about creating a win-win for the industry," said Stephen Bond, Co-Founder of Marine Media Enterprises. "You're not just buying training. You're helping someone learn, and at the same time, you're supporting a charity that is making a real difference in the world."

Marine Media Enterprises already offers a substantial and growing training library developed with empathy, credibility and a



The Bonds are bringing their Donate and Train scheme to the market soon

"This isn't just about information," said Loulla Bond, Co-Founder at Marine Media Enterprises. "It's about access, fairness and dignity. Through Donate and Train, we are giving seafarers the tools they need to thrive, while also supporting carefully chosen charities that are making a positive difference in people's lives."

strong focus on seafarer wellbeing. Topics include mental health, bullying, social isolation, GDPR, cybersecurity, mobile phone safety, and enclosed space entry.

The content also covers shipboard operations during and after the COVID pandemic, drug and alcohol awareness, mentoring, observation skills, incident reporting, financial fraud, just culture, and the master pilot relationship. Further modules tackle port state control, maritime security, hot work safety, working aloft, drinking water safety, and reducing single-use plastics. The company's Personal Safety series ensures practical safety awareness in all parts of the vessel, from the galley to the engine room.

With a legacy of delivering trusted, practical training and a new mission focused on giving back, Stephen and Loulla Bond are once again offering the maritime industry something that blends commercial value with real social impact.

The Donate and Train initiative is now welcoming new customers from across the shipping industry who want to make a tangible difference where it matters most.



Seafarers are all set to benefit from the services of Marine Media Enterprises.

SMART SHIP HUB ACHIEVES INDUSTRY FIRST WITH AMERICAN BUREAU OF SHIPPING (ABS) EMISSION REPORTING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH ASIATIC LLOYD



CEO of Smart Ship Hub Joy Basu



Mr Rajasegaran, Sr. Technical Manager at AL Group

Leading vessel optimisation platform Smart Ship© Hub is delighted to announce its partnership with AL Group – comprising Asiatic Lloyd in Singapore and Atlantic Lloyd in Hamburg - achieving an industry first for emissions reporting.

The Smart Ship© Hub platform has been deployed across the entire fleet of AL Group leveraging high frequency data with historical and legacy data to streamline automated digital live emission reporting with the American Bureau of Shipping,

AL Group is the first ship owner and ship manager to achieve this on the ABS

emission platform, and is one of the first few companies to rollout a digital roadmap with help from Singapore headquartered Smart Ship© Hub. With the rollout across the fleet, the company becomes the flag bearer for data driven actionable insights across condition-based maintenance, emissions management, and automated data quality management for high frequency sensor data, as well as human generated process data. This collaboration ensures enhanced accuracy, operational ease, and complete regulatory compliance for emissions reporting.

Tonci Zdunic Group Fleet Director and K

Rajasegaran, Senior Technical Manager at AL Group were instrumental in leading the rollout of this technology in their fleet.

Mr Zdunic said: “Our collaboration with Smart Ship Hub has unlocked value across technical, commercial and regulatory front. We monitor and control performance of our vessels on real-time analysing of HF sensor data and benchmarking against our company KPIs. We drove KPI and outcome-based success criteria from the beginning. We are delighted to say that we are now at par or ahead of the top 1% that has gone through the full cycle of digital transformation. With Smart Ship Hub, we have significantly raised the bar for automated compliance, data quality management and regulatory filing”

CEO of Smart Ship Hub Joy Basu said: “The all-in-one Smart Ship® Hub digital platform addressing high frequency sensor data as well as automating noon reports, ensuring auto data quality checks, provides a broad spectrum of modular capabilities for our esteemed customers.

“We are delighted see that AL Group has become the first ship owner and manager to utilise the live emission reporting through the ABS platform. Smart Ship® Hub is committed to providing a digital roadmap for companies to lay out their digitalisation plans to ensure they remain competitive as the industry moves towards a data-driven new digital era.”

ABS's integration with Smart Ship® Hub is a validation from a leading body highlighting the need for high quality data, automation



digital platforms and robust technology platforms such as Smart Ship® Hub.

The ABS emissions management platform has provided:

- **Three-Level Data Validation:** Smart Ship Hub's Vessel Reporting System (VRS) ensures over 95% data accuracy, significantly reducing human error and manual intervention.
- **Plug-and-Play Deployment:** The system can be remotely installed on any vessel's existing onboard computer without hardware upgrades—making it operational within minutes at no additional cost.
- **Self-Updating Regulatory Engine:** VRS automatically upgrades and updates itself with the latest rules and regulatory requirements, eliminating owner concerns about outdated submissions and ensuring ongoing compliance without manual effort.

The successful implementation of VRS across AL Group fleet showcases maritime industry's digital shift toward automated, scalable, and regulation-ready solutions that support sustainability and compliance objectives.



AI will transform tomorrow's systems to provide self-optimising ships under human supervision, says OneLink Performance

Capt Pankaj Sharma, MD, OneLink Performance

AI is set to be the biggest transformative shift for maritime with tomorrow's systems being able to decide and execute, says Pankaj Sharma, Managing Director of OneLink Performance. "The future is self-optimising ships with human-in-the-loop supervision," he said.

OneLink Performance believes the widespread adoption of AI-driven autonomous decision support systems that integrate multi-source data, including weather, vessel condition and port logistics, will be the next big step for the industry.

Enhanced digital twins of vessels will enable real-time simulation, condition based monitoring and predictive maintenance, reducing downtime and extending asset life cycles. Furthermore, blockchain-enabled secure data sharing will revolutionise transparency and compliance across the maritime supply chain, says Mr. Sharma.

As a leading vessel optimisation platform OneLink is at the forefront of the AI movement and is integrating a new tool: 'my AI assistant' to its service offering – to act as an onboard operation co-pilot. It will not only monitor KPIs but also recommend actions such as 'adjust RPM to reduce SFOC drift' or 'initiate lube oil top-up based

on trace iron levels.'

Mr Sharma said: "Automation will shift the paradigm from reactive to predictive operations. Today's systems report, whereas tomorrow's systems will decide and execute under human supervision. AI will later evolve from predictive analytics to prescriptive and cognitive systems that can autonomously adjust vessel parameters and coordinate fleet-wide operations."

"Enhanced natural language processing and augmented reality interfaces will further empower crews, improving situational awareness and decision-making efficiency while maintaining safety and regulatory compliance."

My AI assistant could simulate three different RPM profiles for a voyage and suggest the most carbon-efficient plan, considering both technical and commercial metrics. It will also help find engine anomalies, suggesting not only what happened, but why, and how to avoid it.

OneLink is a unique solution that unites a number of performance platforms within one, providing a powerful set of digital services and solutions to the shipping industry.

SHIPPING'S DIGITAL SHIFT DEMANDS SHARPER MESSAGING, GETTING THE MARKET IS ANSWERING IN ASIA

Singapore / Rotterdam, 23 July 2025 – As maritime companies digitize, decarbonize, and expand across continents, standing out in the market has never been more challenging. Customers expect clarity. Talent is scarce. And lead generation takes more than a good product. It requires creativity, consistency, and the right message at the right time. To meet that demand, maritime marketing agency Getting the Market has opened an office in Singapore to support clients across Asia.

The Singapore office comes at a time of accelerating change. From vessel performance software to low-emission technologies, shipping is undergoing both a digital and sustainable shift. But without the right narrative, these solutions risk being overlooked. According to the latest BIMCO/ICS report, the industry will face a shortfall of more than 89,000 officers by 2026. These combined forces are making strategic, global communication more essential than ever.



Laurens Moerland (L) and Frans Swarttouw (R)
Getting the Market

Getting the Market helps maritime and logistics companies explain their value to customers, partners and future employees. Founded in 2011 in Rotterdam, the agency has worked with more than 200 clients on web development, lead generation, employer branding and public relations. With its new base at 160 Robinson Road in Singapore, the team is now closer to clients across APAC and the Far East.

Singapore Strait - Getting the Market

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"Asia is where the momentum is, and we are proud to be part of it," says Frans Swarttouw, founder and co-owner. "What began as a one-man show in the port of Rotterdam has steadily grown into a more global maritime marketing agency. Our Singapore presence puts us right where we need to be to support clients in one of the world's most dynamic regions."

Laurens Moerland, co-owner and head of the Singapore office adds: "Many of our clients operate across continents. With this office, we can build stronger partnerships and generate better results. In Asia, we have seen a clear need for a maritime & logistics marketing agency. We are here to fill that gap."

SWIRE PROJECTS: DRIVING GROWTH THROUGH LEAD GENERATION

One of the agency's first clients in Asia is Swire Projects, headquartered in Singapore. The company manages breakbulk and project cargoes across the globe. "It is refreshing to work with a marketing team that understands the realities of shipping," says Dmitry Pismenny, Marketing & Tenders Manager at Swire Projects. "Getting the Market combines maritime experience with digital skills. That is exactly what we need to build a strong presence in our markets."

VENTURE MARINE SERVICES: SHARPENING ONLINE POSITIONING

In Hong Kong, Venture Marine Services (a Wah Kwong Group Company) is also working with Getting the Market. The



Singapore CBD - Getting the Market

company provides newbuilding, marine, and consultancy services to owners, charterers, and stakeholders worldwide. "We were looking for a partner who speaks our language, both in terms of marketing and maritime," says Hare Ram Sah, General Manager. "The team at Getting the Market has helped us sharpen our online positioning and reach the right audiences."

US-BASED ORBITMI ALSO SEES VALUE IN THE SINGAPORE PRESENCE

New York-based maritime software company OrbitMI, which develops connected maritime intelligence solutions, selected Getting the Market to grow its presence in Asia. "With Asia at the center of maritime trade growth, having a marketing partner that understands both the regional landscape and global context is essential," says Ali Riaz, Founder and CEO of OrbitMI. "Getting the Market's new office puts them exactly where they need to be to help maritime companies communicate clearly, consistently, and with impact."

ECONOWIND RECEIVES REPEAT ORDER FROM TERNTANK FOR TWO MORE VESSELS

Leading Nordic tanker operator continues its commitment to VentoFoil technology

Zeewolde, July 28, 2025 – Econowind has received a repeat order from Terntank for the installation of eight VentoFoil units on two additional methanol-ready hybrid tankers. Following the initial order in May 2023 for three newbuilds, this brings the total to five vessels and 20 VentoFoil, with each ship fitted with four 16-meter wind wings.

The first vessel, Tern Vik, was delivered in April 2025 by China Merchants Jinling Shipyard (Yangzhou). The entire series is equipped with Kongsberg's advanced energy and propulsion management system. Under the K-Sail concept, wind can take the lead when conditions are favorable. Combined with battery packs and dual-fuel engines capable of running on methanol or diesel, the vessels are designed for zero-emission operations and fully aligned with the IMO 2050 targets.

Terntank operates in the Nordic region and focuses on the transport of sustainable fuels. Its newbuilds are among the most environmentally advanced in the market. Wind-Assisted Ship Propulsion is a key element of the design. The VentoFoil is lightweight, foldable for safe and efficient port operations, and fully ATEX-certified to meet tanker safety requirements.

"At Terntank, we are always looking for ways to reduce fuel consumption. It's part of our DNA," said Claes Möller,

CEO of Terntank. "The installation of the VentoFoil and their integration with the Kongsberg system went seamlessly. It's great to see that the actual fuel savings match what was predicted. We're very pleased with the results."

This repeat order follows strong performance results from the first installations, demonstrating the contribution of Wind-Assisted Ship Propulsion to fuel savings and emission reductions. Terntank's confidence in VentoFoil technology is also a signal to the broader market that wind propulsion is no longer a future concept, but a working solution available today.

Econowind's engineering team has worked closely with Terntank and Kongsberg to ensure seamless integration of the VentoFoil into the vessel's overall energy system. The collaborative approach allows real-time optimisation of power sources, where wind, batteries, and fuel-based engines work together to minimise emissions and maximise efficiency.

"We are proud to continue our collaboration with Terntank and support their leadership in sustainable shipping," said Chiel de Leeuw, CCO of Econowind. "This repeat order confirms the performance of our VentoFoil and the shared ambition to decarbonize maritime transport." With this latest order, Econowind has now sold over 130 VentoFoil units. These are being deployed across a wide range of vessel types, including dry bulk carriers, tankers, ro-ro and container ships, reflecting growing momentum for Wind-Assisted Ship Propulsion across the industry.

GROUNDBREAKING STUDY CHARTS COURSE FOR ENHANCED GENDER EQUALITY IN SRI LANKA'S MARITIME INDUSTRY



Main endorsement partners of the report with the Hon. Deputy minister of Ports and Aviation, Hon. Deputy Minister of Women and child affairs, And the Founder of MaritimeSheEO.

A landmark research report, "INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN THE SRI LANKAN MARITIME INDUSTRY – A 2025 STUDY," was officially launched on 24th July 2025, at BMICH, Colombo. This pioneering initiative, spearheaded by MaritimeSheEO in collaboration with Ceyline Group and with the backing of the Director General of Merchant Shipping Sri Lanka (DGMS), marks a significant step towards fostering greater equality within the nation's maritime sector.

This comprehensive study stands as the first of its kind, offering an in-depth examination of women's experiences across the Sri Lankan maritime industry. Its core objectives were to map the current landscape of women's participation, pinpoint existing barriers, and formulate actionable recommendations to cultivate a more inclusive environment, aligning with the

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Key areas of focus included assessing the representation of women and roles they undertake in the maritime industry, identifying obstacles such as gender bias, limited access to training, and insufficient supportive policies, and devising practical strategies to enhance gender diversity and inclusion.

This report highlights the achievements and challenges for women in Sri Lanka's maritime sector and intends to drive necessary changes to empower women in the sector" stated Sanjam Sahi Gupta, Founder of MaritimeSheEO. "The findings will establish a crucial baseline for future research, policy development, and industry initiatives, ultimately ensuring a more equitable and conducive environment for all who contribute to this vital industry."

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The study furnishes data that will inform policies promoting gender equality, identifies best practices for integrating women into all facets of the maritime industry, and establishes a benchmark for future research and progress monitoring.

The Deputy Minister of Women and Child Affairs in Sri Lanka, (Hon) Dr. Namal Sudarshana, and Deputy Minister of Ports and Civil Aviation, (Hon) Eng. Janith Ruvan Kodithuwakku, attended the event as the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour and emphasized the importance of gender inclusion across Sri Lanka's maritime industry. Their presence underscored the government's commitment to supporting initiatives that empower women and promote diversity within key economic sectors. Both ministers highlighted how crucial it is to break down existing barriers and create pathways for women to thrive in all roles within the maritime and logistic industry, recognizing their vital contribution to national development.

Participants in this extensive study included a wide array of stakeholders: employers (ship owners, operators, ports, navy, service providers), seafarers (both commercial and naval personnel), and shore-based maritime employees (administrative, technical, and support roles).

The success of this project was significantly bolstered by the involvement of key Endorsement partners, Ceylon Association of Shipping Agents (CASA), The Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA), Sri Lanka Association of NVOCC Agents (SLANA), Society of Chief Engineers Marine (SOCEM), Institute of Marine Engineering Science & Technology

(IMAREST), Freight forwarders association (SLFFA), Association of Clearing Forwarding Agents (ACFA) and Young Ship Sri Lanka. Their contributions, alongside the support of numerous other maritime associations, are instrumental in fostering a more equitable and diverse maritime workforce across Sri Lanka.

A particularly inspiring highlight of the launch event was the notable attendance of female cadets from leading Maritime Training Institutes such as the MSTI Maritime Academy, SMTI (Southern Maritime Training Institute), CINEC Campus, NDT from ITUM of University of Moratuwa. Their presence underscored the unwavering commitment of these institutions towards cultivating a diverse and inclusive maritime workforce for the future.

The Honorable Prime Minister, Dr. Harini Amarasuriya, emphasized the study's dual role, stating, & This study serves as both a valuable resource and a resolute call to action. I strongly encourage all stakeholders – government bodies, industry leaders, training institutions, and civil society organizations – to engage deeply with its findings and commit to concrete, sustained steps to advance gender inclusion across Sri Lanka's maritime and blue economy sectors & Maritime SheEO is an organization dedicated to empowering women in the maritime industry globally. It aims to create the next generation of women leaders and promote gender equality, through its work in research reports, a global annual conference, leadership programs to empower women to become great leaders, and a community of over 700 women from across the world.



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