

9 November 2022



Shipping action plan launched at COP27 in response to new research cautioning ‘as many as 800,000 seafarers’ due for carbon upskilling by the mid-2030s.

- Maritime Just Transition Task Force ‘*Mapping a Maritime Just Transition for Seafarers*’ paper puts forward a 10-point action plan in response to new research.
- Modelling of three emission reduction scenarios estimates hundreds of thousands seafarers requiring additional training to handle alternative fuels up to 2050.
- Action Plan makes practical recommendations for industry, governments and workers and academia (including training providers).

9 November 2022, COP27 — Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: A new [Action Plan](#), launched at COP 27 by UN organizations, shipowners and unions, sets out recommendations to upskill seafarers to meet shipping’s decarbonisation goals. The plan is in response to findings from new research, the modelling of which cautions that as many as 800,000 seafarers will require additional training by the mid-2030s.

Currently accounting for 3% of global emissions, shipping needs to transition away from conventional fuels towards alternative low- and zero-carbon fuels and technologies to meet the world’s target of keeping global warming to 1.5C or less by 2050.

The three emission reduction scenarios assessed in the [research](#) highlight an immediate need to start putting the training infrastructure in place, to ensure hundreds of thousands of the world’s nearly two million seafarers are upskilled and empowered through the transition. Findings also suggest that a lack of certainty on alternative fuel options is having knock-on effects for seafarer

training, as the global maritime community works towards a clearer decarbonization pathway in a post-fossil fuel era.

The research was conducted by leading maritime consultancy DNV and commissioned by the [Maritime Just Transition Task Force Secretariat](#). The Maritime Just Transition Task Force was formed to ensure that shipping's response to the climate emergency puts seafarers and communities at the heart of the solution.

In response to the training challenge that the modelling lays bare, the [Action Plan](#) makes recommendations for industry, governments, seafarer unions and academia (including training providers). These recommendations include:

- Strengthening global training standards
- Ensuring a health-and-safety-first approach
- Establishing advisory national maritime skills councils

Stephen Cotton, General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) said,

“All three scenarios DNV identified require some form of retraining the workforce. The good news is that seafarers are prepared and willing to be part of this transition. But crew want to know that the fuels they're handling are indeed safe, and that we as an industry have the training pathways established to upgrade their skills. Seafarers and other maritime workers are already feeling the effects of an unstable climate — dry unnavigable rivers, soaring ocean surface temperatures, shutdown ports with heatwaves and flash floods.”

Sanda Ojiambo, Assistant Secretary-General and CEO of the UN Global Compact, said:

“Climate action focused on people and job creation must be at the core of a Just Transition to Net Zero. This new paper highlights that aligning with a 1.5 C trajectory requires action now to support the upskilling of the maritime workforce as the shipping industry moves to rapidly cut its greenhouse gas emissions. The action-plan represents a global first — it marks the first business sector uniting in a tripartite framework — shipowners, seafarers' unions and UN organisations — to discuss how to secure a Just Transition together.”

Guy Platten, Secretary General, International Chamber of Shipping, said:

“There is an urgent need to establish the infrastructure and training required to prepare our seafaring workforce, both in developed and developing countries, to help meet our decarbonisation objectives. This should be done as of today, so they are ready and able to meet the challenges that new green fuels and propulsion technologies will pose and mitigate any potential health and safety risks for ships, communities, the environment and seafarers themselves. This is an opportunity for all so that no-one is left behind. Shipping cannot decarbonise without its workers and the 10-point action plan developed by the Task Force maps out a pathway for how this can be achieved, as our industry continues to navigate towards a decarbonised future.”

CEO of leading maritime consultancy DNV Maritime, Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen, said:

”Decarbonization is bringing new opportunities, new technologies but also new risks. Our first priority must be to achieve safe decarbonisation. We must take a collaborative approach to safeguard our people, our ships and our environment. This report points to the challenges and the tangible actions the industry can take to support and protect its workforce. DNV is pleased to see the action plan led by the Task Force and recognize the challenge moving forward to train seafarers on alternative fuel technologies.”

Kitack Lim, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, said:

“Climate change is a global issue that requires a global response. We must use every tool available to decarbonize the maritime sector. Alternative fuels and green technologies can help meet emission reduction targets. This cannot happen without the people who will be at the heart of implementing shipping’s decarbonization journey. It is clear that seafarers must have the appropriate training for a smooth transition to a greener future. This is something that will be in sharp focus as IMO works on its comprehensive review of the [STCW Training Convention](#).”

Gilbert F. Hounbo, Director-General, International Labour Organization:

“A Just Transition to addressing the climate crisis must be human-centred. Greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind, is essential. Efforts to decarbonize shipping should be undertaken in accordance with the ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. Doing so will achieve a transition for seafarers and other maritime workers based upon the importance of labour standards, productivity, skills

development, lifelong learning, social justice and equality, and which is therefore truly sustainable.”

Quotes from shipowner, seafarer:

Karin Orsel, CEO, MF Shipping, said:

“As shipowners and operators, we must recognise that we cannot achieve a green transition without our seafarers. Shipping has an opportunity to be a leader in the creation of a just green transition, in which we invest in the training and upskilling of our workforce, create decent job opportunities for all, not just for the few, raise work standards, tackle safety concerns, and ensure diversity issues are addressed from the outset. This is good business sense, this is ethically and morally the right thing to do, and importantly, if we embed just transition practices into our operations from the outset, we will as an industry have a stronger chance of meeting our global carbon reduction targets.”

Cleo Bierneza, a seafarer (Third Officer) from the Philippines working aboard cargo ships, said:

“As seafarers, we see climate change happening. Some voyages get very hot nowadays for crew onboard, and in some places of the world the weather will change extremely, without warning. It didn’t used to be like that. I would like maritime to reduce our own carbon if we can, so crew can have a more stable climate to work with. I am excited for a Just Transition, because we can make seafaring an even better job and hopefully bring in more women to become seafarers.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Background information

- Shipping supplies the world with food, fuel, medicines and goods, accounting for 90% of world trade and 3% of global GHG emissions. A fourth propulsion revolution is now underway for shipping to transition towards alternative low- and zero-carbon fuels and technologies.
- The ‘*Mapping a Maritime Just Transition for Seafarers*’ paper which contains the Action Plan was jointly prepared by members of the Maritime Just Transition Task Force Secretariat — the International Chamber of Shipping, the International Transport Workers’ Federation, and the United Nations Global Compact.

- The Paper was contributed to by Task Force members, the International Maritime Organization and the International Labour Organization.
- The full DNV report — *‘Insights into training and skills needed to support a decarbonized shipping industry’* — can be found here

MEDIA CONTACT

For a copy of the position paper please contact:

For press queries please contact:

Namrata Nadkarni at Intent Communications

namrata@intentcommunications.co.uk

+44(0)7598025513

ABOUT THE TASK FORCE

The Maritime Just Transition Task Force was established during COP26 in November 2021, by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), the United Nations Global Compact, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Task Force aims to support a just and human-centred decarbonization of the shipping industry. The Task Force is grateful to its primary funder, [Lloyd’s Register Foundation](#), and to its programme partner, the [Singapore Maritime Foundation](#). More information on the Maritime Just Transition Task Force can be found on the UN Global Compact [website](#), the International Chamber of Shipping [website](#) and the International Transport Workers’ Federation [website](#).

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

About the UN Global Compact: As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations Global Compact is a call to companies everywhere to align their operations and strategies with 10 universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and to take action in support of UN goals. With more than 15,000 companies and 3,000 non-

business signatories based in over 160 countries, and 69 Local Networks, it is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world.

About the ITF: The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is a democratic, affiliate-led federation of transport workers' unions recognised as the world's leading transport authority. We fight passionately to improve working lives; connecting trade unions and workers' networks from 147 countries to secure rights, equality and justice for their members. We are the voice of the almost 20 million women and men who move the world, including over a million seafarers working in domestic trade and international shipping.

About ICS: The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the principal international trade association for merchant shipowners and operators, representing all sectors and trades and over 80% of the world merchant fleet.