

The Latest Issues in International Maritime May 2026

➤ IMO International Maritime News

- Reviewing Maritime News from April to the beginning of May 2026 (p2-9)

➤ IMO Meeting Highlights

- IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) 84th session (MEPC 84) (p10-21)

IMO joins Asia-Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies annual meeting (1/2)



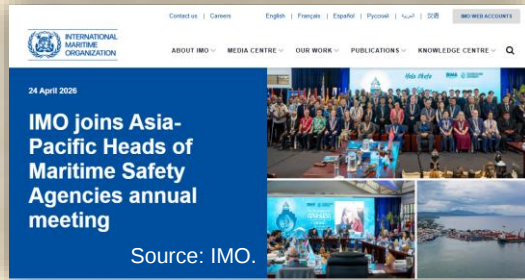
This year, from April 14 to 16, “The Annual Meeting of the Asia and Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies (APHoMSA)” was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, with representatives from 20 countries across the Asia-Pacific region and six observer organizations in attendance. The forum had discussed topics including women in maritime sector, safety at sea, seafarer welfare, marine environment protection, maritime incident response, and improving regional cooperation.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez gave opening remarks, reflecting the launch of the Regional Presence Office for the Pacific in Fiji as a center of coordination, knowledge, and technical expertise, directly supporting the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The Secretary-General also emphasized the vital role of APHoMSA in translating global policies into practical actions, thereby complementing the IMO’s work at the global level.

More Info

- [The Asia and Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies \(APHoMSA\)](#) was established in 1996, aiming to promote safe, secure shipping and a clean marine environment within the Asia-Pacific region. APHoMSA seeks to achieve its objective by bringing together senior maritime officials from member administrations to develop and maintain a comprehensive understanding of common maritime issues, identify and coordinate technical cooperation, and represent regional interests in advancing international standards.
- APHoMSA holds an annual meeting each year. Membership is open to all Pacific Rim countries and territories, subject to invitation and the agreement of existing members. Information on the 2026 Annual Meeting was presented, and it was noted that the 26th APHoMSA Meeting will be held in Vancouver, Canada, in 2027.

IMO joins Asia-Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies annual meeting (2/2)



➤ **Marine Environmental Protection and Technical Cooperation**

- **Regulatory Promotion:** IMO updated the ratification progress within the region regarding the support and implementation of MARPOL Annex V (Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships) and the London Protocol (Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter).
- **Marine Plastic Litter:** The [OceanLitter Programme](#) is being actively promoted to assist countries in developing national action plans, implementing legal reforms, strengthening Port State Control (PSC), and enhancing management capacities for handling marine plastic litter.
- **Enhancing Technical Support:** An introduction was provided on the structural adjustment of the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP), alongside advancements made to the TC Request Management System and the TC Dashboard. (The [link](#) may be accessed via the official IMO website, but Member State status/credentials are required for login.)

- **the 2026-2027 World Maritime Day Theme: “From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence,”** and encouraged APHoMSA Members to promote and implement this theme in relevant activities.

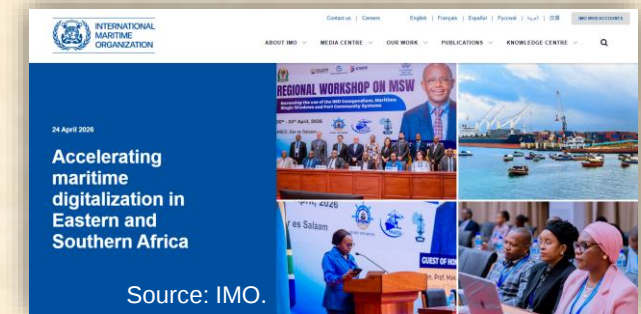
➤ **the Middle East crisis**

- **Seafarer Safety:** the Chair for this forum, Mr. Thierry Nervale, Director, Solomon Islands Maritime Authority, particularly mentioned the collateral impact of the Middle East crisis on the Pacific region and called on all member states to support the demands of the IMO Secretary-General, respect the rights and freedoms of navigation, and give priority to protecting the safety and well-being of seafarers.

IMO Accelerating maritime digitalization in Eastern and Southern Africa(1/2)

IMO, the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP) and the World Bank, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport of Tanzania, convened a regional workshop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to strengthen port digitalization across 12 African countries.

The workshop sought to facilitate the adoption of *the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business*, which provides a framework for structuring and electronically exchanging shipping and port data to streamline communications. It also promoted the implementation of Maritime Single Windows (MSWs) and Port Community Systems (PCSs)—integrated digital platforms designed to simplify ship and cargo clearance procedures, reduce delays caused by administrative processes, and enhance Africa’s competitiveness in global maritime trade.



➤ Strengthening regional collaboration

- **Cross-organizational integration:** invited regional and international institutions, including the Port Management Association of Eastern & Southern Africa ([PMAESA](#)), the African Development Bank ([AfDB](#)), the African Harbour Masters' Committee (AHMC) and the African Alliance for Electronic Commerce (AAEC) to translate policy into action.
- **Mutual learning and knowledge sharing:** Officials from 12 countries—including Angola, Djibouti, Kenya, and South Africa—shared the current status of their respective port systems. Through peer-to-peer exchanges, they worked together to address the technical and administrative challenges encountered during the deployment of the Maritime Single Window (MSW).

More Info

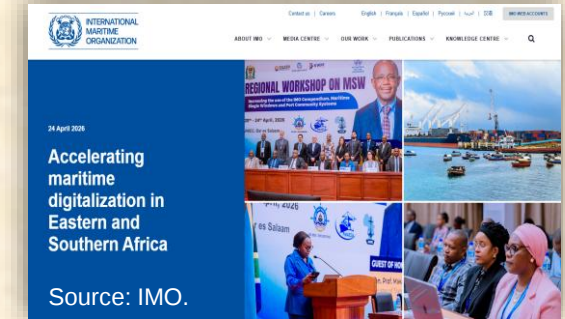
- The Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP) in this seminar includes coordinating and unifying the MSW initiatives of various countries, as well as identifying areas that require continuous support and targeted technical assistance.

IMO Accelerating maritime digitalization in Eastern and Southern Africa(2/2)

➤ **Supporting a regional trade facilitation ecosystem:**

The workshop mainly highlights that the issues of Maritime Single Window (MSW) and Port Community System (PCS) are not independent digital solutions but rather the fundamental backbone that supports the entire regional trade.

- **synergistic effect:** with discussion of the collaboration between PCS and MSW, aiming to simplify the customs clearance process for ships and cargo and eliminate delays caused by bureaucratic operations.
- **Standardized Interface:** Promoting the *IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business* to ensure shipping and port data possess a unified structure and format during electronic exchange, thereby establishing a harmonious and interoperable regional trade environment.
- This seminar references a previous joint report by the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) and the World Bank, titled "[*Port Community Systems: Lessons from Global Experience.*](#)"



➤ **Aligned with SSATP Strategic Agenda**

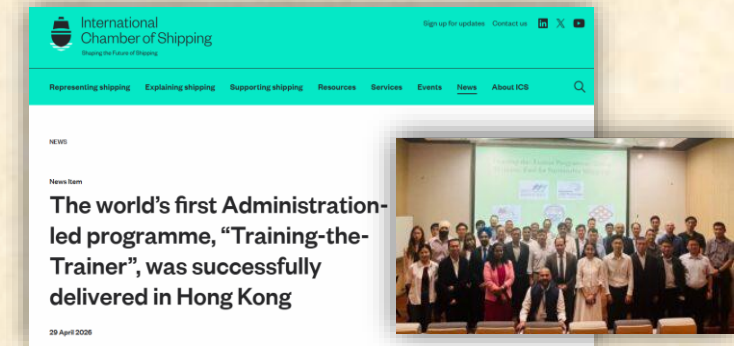
Echoing the core vision of the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP), this initiative aligns with [SSATP's Fourth Development Plan \(DP4\)](#).

- **Digital Corridors:** SSATP prioritizes "Digital Transport and Trade Corridors," identifying the implementation of Maritime Single Windows (MSW) as a critical vehicle for reducing logistical costs and enhancing port efficiency.
- **Technical Assistance and Coordination:** SSATP acts as a "facilitator" to ensure that various national MSW initiatives are mutually aligned and standardized, while providing subsequent technical support and funding guidance to ensure the long-term sustainability of the digital transformation.

Hong Kong has launched the world's first "Training-the-Trainer" program for maritime alternative fuels jointly led by government agencies(1/2)

In April 2026, the world's first Administration-led **"Training-the-Trainer" (TTT) programme** was successfully delivered in Hong Kong. This training programme was spearheaded by the Maritime Just Transition Task Force (MJTTF)—whose members include the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and the UN Global Compact (UNGC)—and co-organized with the Transport and Logistics Bureau of the Government of Hong Kong. As part of Hong Kong's *"Action Plan on Green Maritime Fuel Bunkering"* policy, the initiative aims to cultivate talent related to green maritime fuels.

Delivered over 2 three-day tiered activities, the core objective of the programme was to demonstrate how [the baseline and advanced alternative fuel training frameworks](#) developed by the MJTTF can be translated into concrete training programmes. The programme's participants included professionals from maritime education and training (MET) institutions, shipping companies, seafarers' unions, auditing bodies, classification societies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By equipping them as "trainers," they will be able to return to their respective organizations to educate both seafarers and shore-based personnel on the safe handling and use of alternative fuels.

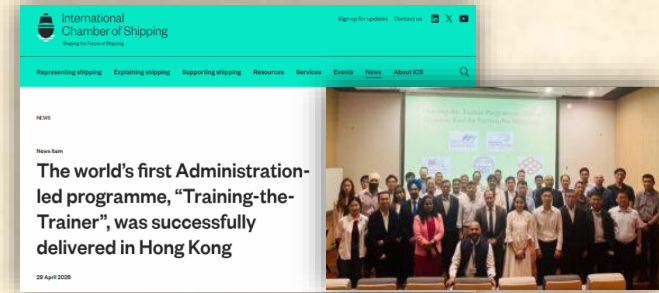


Source: [Arvind Natrajan](#) from International Chamber of Shipping (ICS).

More Info

- [The Maritime Just Transition Task Force \(MJTTF\)](#) mainly aims to ensure that the shipping industry takes measures to respond to the climate emergency and places seafarers at the core of the solutions.
- This initiative was led by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the International Federation of Transport Workers (ITF), and the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), and was established in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), advocating for the emphasis on human factors in the decarbonization process.
- The group is committed to strengthening cooperation among industry stakeholders, the government, non-governmental organizations and the academic community. The recent focus of work is on training and safety, aiming to assist the shipping industry in accelerating the adoption of zero-emission and near-zero-emission fuels in a responsible manner °

Hong Kong has launched the world's first "Training-the-Trainer" program for maritime alternative fuels jointly led by government agencies(2/2)



Source: [Arvind Natrajan](#) from International Chamber of Shipping (ICS).

➤ Programme Highlights and Practical Discussions:

- ✓ **Regulatory Background and Vision Sharing:** This included a review of the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction initiatives and the latest strategy established by the IMO, prompting industry representatives and policymakers to engage in in-depth discussions on the vision for future training pathways regarding methanol and ammonia-fueled vessels.
- ✓ **Interactive Course Design and Pedagogy:** Led by institutions such as the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC), Indian Maritime University (IMU), and the Antwerp Maritime Academy (AMA) in Belgium, participants engaged in case studies and interactive activities to practically apply the MJTTF training framework in developing course objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment criteria. The curriculum further integrated foundational pedagogical theories, IMO model courses, and practical onboard technical experience.
- ✓ **Industry Practical Experience and Scenario Simulation:** Two ship management companies—**Anglo-Eastern and Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement (BSM)**—shared their journeys of practically applying [the MJTTF guidelines](#) to roll out familiarization programmes, alongside their practical experience in negotiating seafarer certification for dual-fuel vessels with flag Administrations.
 - Simulating seafarer certification negotiations with a virtual flag Administration from the perspectives of various industry stakeholders, followed by sharing observational insights with one another;
 - Exploring future training pathways for methanol and ammonia-fueled vessels;
 - Learning how to formulate course objectives and assessment criteria in accordance with *the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW Convention)* and *the International Safety Management Code (ISM Code)*.



Source: MarineLink; DNV.

DNV: 38 New Orders for Alternative-Fueled Vessels in April (1/2)

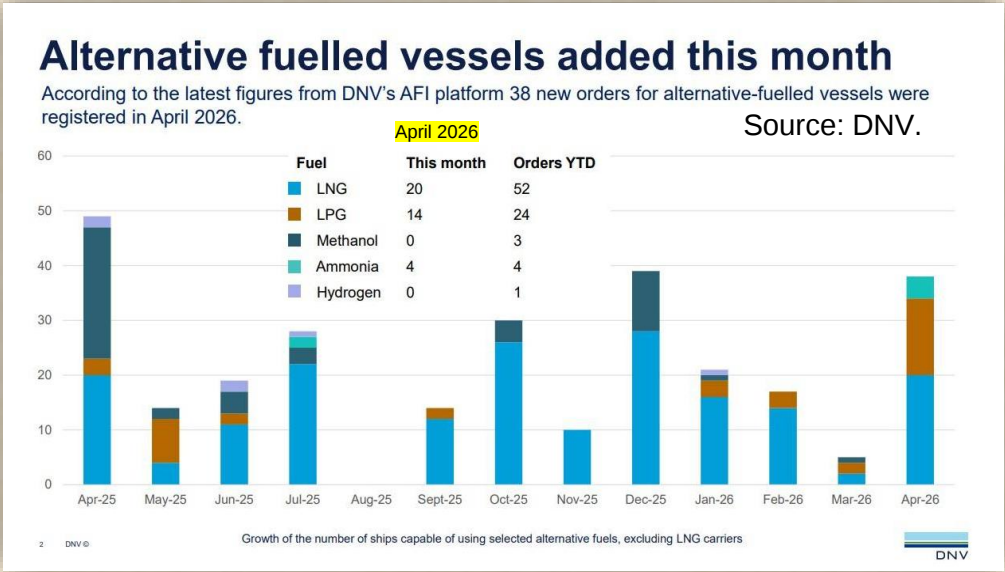


Figure 1: April 2025 to April 2026, each month
Alternative fuel vessel registered

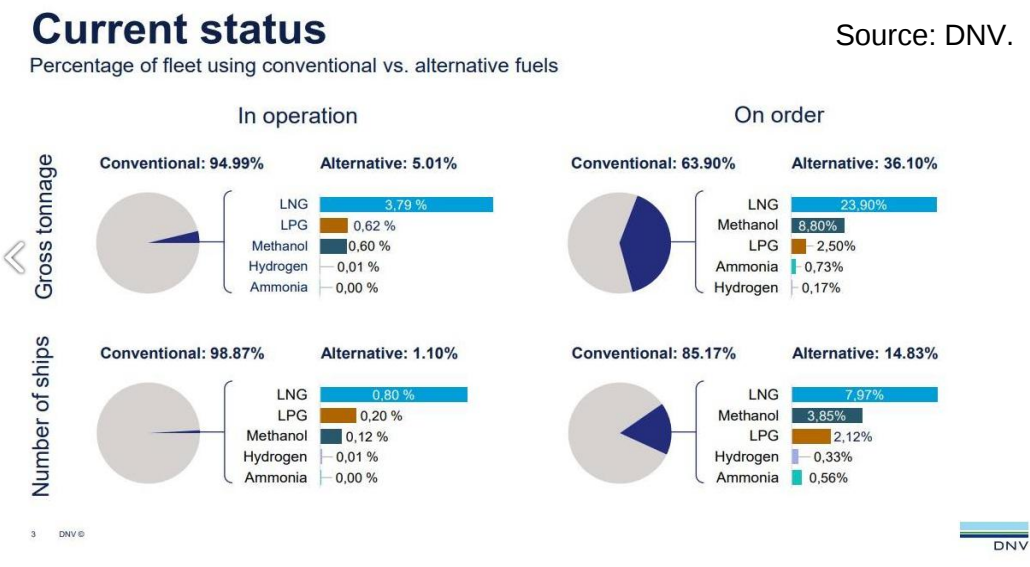
According to the latest data from DNV's Alternative Fuels Insight (AFI) platform, 38 new orders for alternative-fueled vessels were placed in April 2026. The majority of these orders (20 vessels) were for liquefied natural gas (LNG) fueled vessels. By segment, these included car carriers (8 vessels), container vessels (6 vessels), crude oil tankers (4 vessels), and cruise vessels (2 vessels).

This was followed by 14 orders placed for LPG/ethane carriers, and the remaining 4 orders were for ammonia-fueled vessels in the bulk carrier segment. Overall, the AFI figures show that a total of 83 alternative-fueled vessels have been ordered in the first four months of 2026.



Source: MarineLink; DNV.

DNV: 38 New Orders for Alternative-Fueled Vessels in April (2/2)



While the broader trend towards LNG remains evident in the data, the order distribution across segments was wider in April, with a notable uptake in the tanker and cruise segments. Experts point out that this trend towards multi-fuel development and wider application across vessel types is crucial for driving the global shipping transition.

Jason Stefanatos, the Global Decarbonization Director at DNV Maritime, specifically highlighted that while ammonia is still at an early stage as a marine fuel, the ordering of these 4 ammonia-fueled bulk carriers stands out. The operational experience gained from projects like these in the future will be essential for advancing the shipping industry from concept to practical capability towards wider adoption.

Figure 2: Current status percentage of each type of Alternative Fuel vessel (including operation and on order)

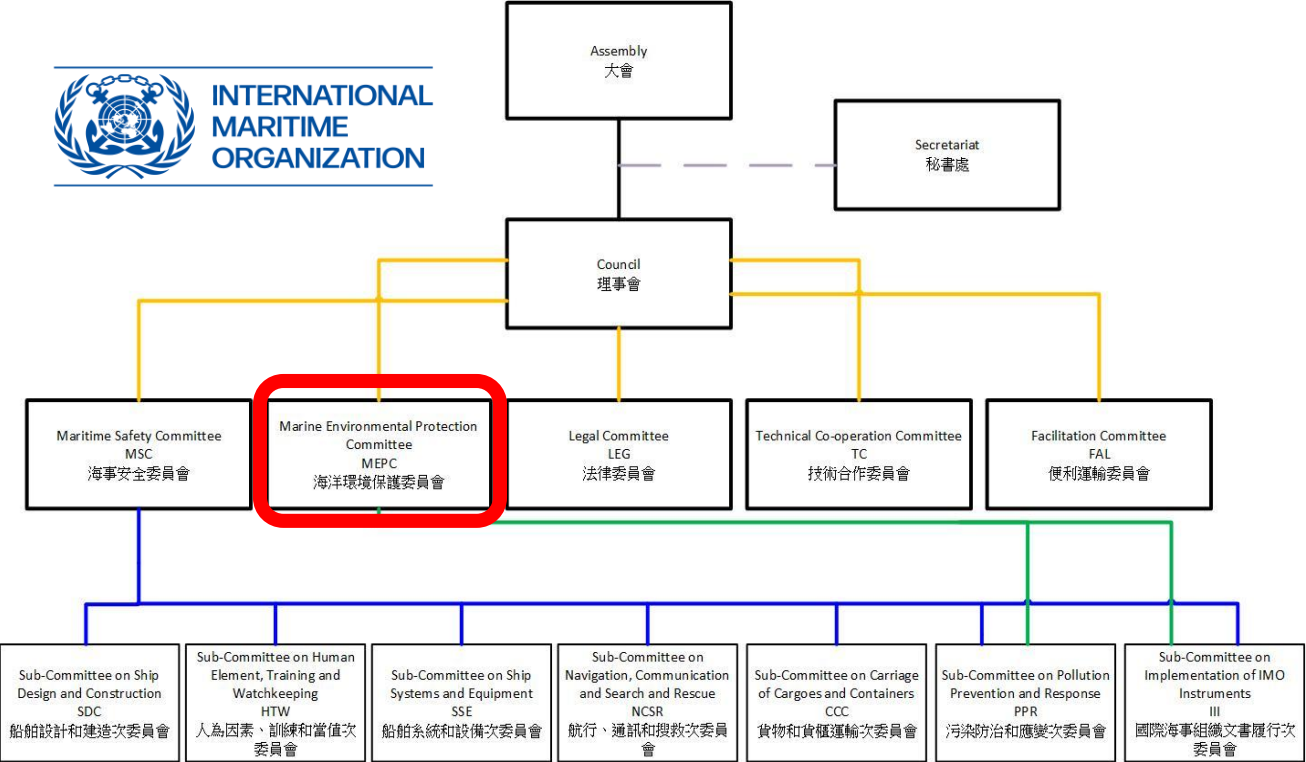
The background of the slide is a vibrant underwater scene featuring a coral reef. Various types of coral, including branching and plate corals, are visible in shades of yellow, orange, and green. Several small, colorful fish are swimming in the clear blue water. The overall lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day at the surface.

International Maritime Organization Marine Environmental Protection Committee 84th session (MEPC 84)

27th April-1st May 2026

II. IMO's Meeting Highlights

Organization Structure of IMO



Source: Made by NKUST-CIMCS.

Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC)

- The IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) is one of the five Committees of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- MEPC is primarily responsible for IMO marine environmental matters. This includes the control and prevention of ship-sourced pollution covered under the International Maritime Organization's International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), including pollution from oil, noxious liquid substances in bulk, sewage, garbage, and ship emissions, such as air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Other matters addressed by the MEPC include ballast water management, anti-fouling systems, ship recycling, pollution preparedness and response, and the designation of Special Areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs).



Photo by IMO on Flickr

II. IMO’s Meeting Highlights

MEPC 84 Agenda

Item No.	Agenda	Item No.	Agenda
1	Adoption of the agenda	9	Experience-building phase for the reduction of underwater radiated noise from shipping
2	Decisions of other bodies	10	Pollution prevention and response
3	Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments	11	Reports of other sub-committees
4	Harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water	12	Identification and protection of Special Areas, ECAs and PSSAs
5	Air pollution prevention	13	Application of the Committees' method of work
6	Energy efficiency of ships	14	Work programme of the Committee and subsidiary bodies
7	Reduction of GHG emissions from ships	15	Any other business
8	Follow-up work emanating from the Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships	16	Consideration of the report of the Committee

Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments

Agenda Item 3

- **Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments**

MEPC 84 considered and adopted the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, which include:

1. Designating the North-East Atlantic Ocean as an Emission Control Area (ECA) for Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), Sulphur Oxides (SO_x), and Particulate Matter (PM);
2. Clarifying the data reporting items required by Regulation 27 and Regulation 28, relating to Appendix IX "Information to be submitted to the IMO Ship Fuel Oil Consumption Database (Regulation 27)", and enhancing the public accessibility of the IMO Data Collection System (IMO DCS);
3. Revised the definitions related to marine diesel engines fitted with multiple engine operational profiles and the format of the International Air Pollution Prevention (IAPP) Certificate in Appendix I, including clarifying provisions related to engine test cycles.

- These amendments will enter into force on 1st September 2027, with the 0.10% sulphur limit taking effect 12 months later. As for the NO_x Tier III engine certification requirements, they will apply to ships for which the building contract is placed on or after 1st January 2027; or in the absence of a building contract, ships the keels of which are laid or which are at a similar stage of construction on or after 1st July 2027; or the delivery of which is on or after 1st January 2031.

Harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water

Agenda Item 4

- Approved a set of amendments to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), which are subject to adoption at MEPC 85 in November 2026. The date of entry into force will be determined upon adoption, but it is expected to enter into force in spring 2028.
- Adopted the revised *Guidelines for ballast water management and development of Ballast Water Management Plans* (G4), integrating existing IMO circulars and guidelines.

More Info

The amendments to G4 ensure that relevant procedures are documented in the Ballast Water Management Plan (BWMP), including:

1. Contingency measures ([BWM.2/Circ.62](#));
2. Management of Challenging Water Quality (CWQ) conditions (resolution [MEPC.387\(81\)](#));
3. Temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks, where applicable ([BWM.2/Circ.82](#));
4. Maintenance procedures, maintenance schedules, and references related to the operation manual of the Ballast Water Management System (BWMS).

Air Pollution Prevention

Agenda Item 5

- MEPC 84 finalized and approved draft amendments to the NOx Technical Code to address the certification of engines operating on non-carbon fuels and fuel mixtures. These amendments establish a clear regulatory framework for certifying NOx emissions from gas-fueled engines.
- MEPC 84 also approved amendments regarding the use of multiple engine operational profiles and the clarification of engine test cycles. These amendments will apply to new engine groups and engine series certified on or after 1st January 2028.
- MEPC 84 approved draft amendments to Regulation 15 of MARPOL Annex VI, requiring crude oil tankers to be fitted with pressure-vacuum valves (P/V valves) with a minimum opening pressure of 0.20 bar. These amendments are subject to adoption at MEPC 85 in November 2026, and this requirement will apply only to crude oil tankers constructed on or after the date of entry into force of the amendments.

Ship Energy Efficiency

Agenda Item 6

- It should be clarified that even if the data declaration is classified as "underway" and "not underway" starting from 2027, the Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII) shall continue to be calculated based on the total emissions and distance traveled within a calendar year.
- Revised circular [MEPC.1/Circ.905](#), specifying that starting from the 2027 reporting year, the carbon factor for biofuel blends should be calculated using a mass-weighted average rather than an energy-weighted average.
- **Methane and Nitrous Oxide Emissions:** Finalized and adopted three sets of guidelines to establish a toolkit for determining the actual "tank-to-wake" (TtW) methane and nitrous oxide emission values.
- **Onboard Carbon Capture and Storage (OCCS):** Considered the draft guidelines for the testing, survey, certification, and approval of OCCS systems, and provided further guidance to the correspondence group.
- **Review of Short-Term Measures (EEXI, SEEMP, and CII rating):** Initiated Phase II of the review of the IMO short-term GHG reduction measures, which is expected to be completed in 2028. Continued to advance the strengthening of the SEEMP framework to incorporate internal reviews, implementation logs, and enhanced auditing requirements. Additionally, the Committee adopted amendments to the guidelines on the method of calculation and survey/certification of the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) to clarify the definition of the primary fuel for dual-fuel engines using two liquid fuels, specifically methanol and ethanol.

Reduction of GHG emissions from ships

Agenda Item 7

- The IMO Net-Zero Framework (NZF) was originally scheduled for further consideration at MEPC/ES.2; however, the extraordinary session was adjourned in October 2025. Although MEPC 84 continued discussions on mid-term GHG reduction measures, no substantive decision has yet been reached on the elements of the Framework. Further work will continue through the ISWG-GHG to address the views and concerns raised by various parties.
- ISWG-GHG 21 has reported to the MEPC and will continue to develop relevant guidelines supporting the implementation of the NZF, including the calculation of GHG Fuel Intensity (GFI), fuel certification, and the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) framework. Meanwhile, the 5th IMO GHG Study is expected to be initiated in 2026 and completed in 2028, providing a crucial foundation for subsequent policy reviews and technical decision-making.
- MEPC continued to advance the regulatory framework for Onboard Carbon Capture and Storage (OCCS), with preliminary confirmation that OCCS may include permanent CO₂ mineralization technologies. Relevant onboard emissions should be verified by the Administration and may be taken into account at the ship level under the NZF GFI guidelines. However, issues regarding the responsibility for downstream emission certification, LCA system boundaries, and the legal applicability of CO₂ disposal at sea remain to be further clarified.

Addressing Marine Plastic Litter from Ships

Agenda Item 8

More Info

- Adopted the draft "2026 Strategy and Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships", which will update and replace the "2021 Strategy" ([resolution MEPC.341\(77\)](#)) and the "2025 Action Plan" ([resolution MEPC.404\(83\)](#)).
- Considered the recommendations of PPR 13 to develop a new code for the maritime transport of plastic pellets in freight containers, making it mandatory under MARPOL Annex III and/or the SOLAS Convention.
- In addition, the Committee approved a draft MEPC circular to facilitate the implementation of fishing gear marking systems and *the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear* (VGMFG).

The Strategy to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships reaffirms the IMO's commitment to reducing marine plastic litter from all ships, including fishing vessels. Its focus areas include reducing the impact of shipping on marine plastic pollution, improving the effectiveness of port reception facilities and waste treatment, and strengthening international regulations and compliance mechanisms. Its goal is to achieve zero discharge of plastic waste from ships into the sea by 2030.

II. IMO's Meeting Highlights

Recommendation for MEPC 84

1. Although the Committee did not reach a substantive decision on the IMO Net-Zero Framework at this session, it **agreed to hold two additional ISWG-GHG sessions prior to MEPC 85 to continue working on the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI and associated guidelines**. Meanwhile, **the review of the CII and SEEMP has entered Phase II**, which may lead to strengthened ship energy efficiency management, implementation logs, and auditing requirements in the future. Administrations are advised to continuously monitor their impact on flag State oversight and data verification practices.
2. The Committee approved the draft amendments **to the *Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention*** and adopted the **2026 Guidelines for ballast water management and development of Ballast Water Management Plans (G4)**. The focus has shifted from "equipment installation" to "operational effectiveness of the system," including maintenance records, failure reporting, time-bound rectification, and compliance verification with the D-2 discharge standard. Administrations are advised to pay attention to the subsequent impacts on surveys, RO verification, and PSC inspection practices.
3. The Committee agreed to initiate the development of a new mandatory code for the maritime transport of plastic pellets in freight containers, which may also entail amendments to MARPOL Annex III and the SOLAS Convention. In addition, the Committee adopted the *2026 Strategy and Action Plan* to address marine plastic litter from ships, aiming to achieve zero discharge of plastic waste from ships into the sea by 2030. Administrations are advised to continue monitoring the development of requirements concerning the packaging, stowage, and reporting of plastic pellets, as well as port management.

II. IMO's Meeting Highlights

Next MEPC Meeting

MEPC 85

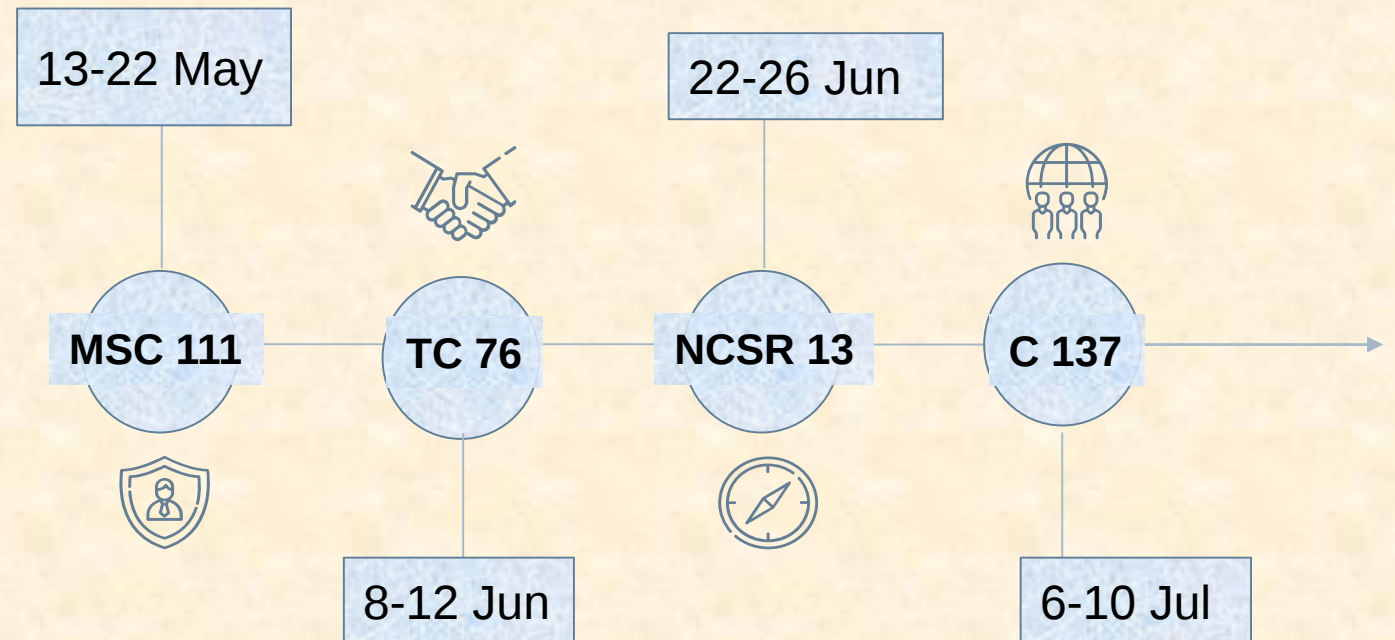
Would be held from November 23rd to 27th in 2027.



Source: IMO

Next Meeting schedules for IMO

- **MSC:**
from May 13th to 22nd 2026.
- **TC 76:**
from June 8th to 12th 2026.



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Have a nice day. Thank you!

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