



Maritime
UK

Maritime Manifesto 2024



Foreword

Maritime UK is the umbrella organisation convening the maritime industries of the United Kingdom including ports, professional services, leisure marine, shipping and engineering. We provide a single high-level voice which represents an incredible sector worth more than £116 billion annually, supporting almost 1.1 million jobs. Maritime UK supports and encourages industry representation from every corner of the UK to speak for the various maritime eco-systems and sub-sectors.

As a general election looms, Maritime UK along with its members are using this opportunity to set out its 2024 Manifesto. The Maritime Manifesto 2024 outlines recommendations and opportunities for the future government centring around three themes:

- 1. People**
- 2. Infrastructure**
- 3. Green Fuels**

Maritime encapsulates one of our greatest national assets, Britain's heritage as an island nation. We want to assist the future government in nurturing this asset and make the UK a global leader in maritime.

The Maritime Manifesto 2024 represents the consensus of shared policy priorities across the entire maritime sector. Our members are eager to work with the future administrations within this shared vision on areas that touch their respective industries more closely.

Maritime UK

Maritime UK is the umbrella body for the maritime sector convening the shipping, ports, services, engineering and leisure marine industries.

Our purpose is to enable and champion a thriving maritime sector. Working in close partnership with Government, Maritime UK contributes to the work of the Department for Transport's Maritime Council in monitoring the delivery of Maritime 2050, and supports the Transport Select Committee's recommendations to accelerate the implementation of this strategy.¹ Maritime UK has primary responsibility for the coordination and delivery of industry recommendations in Maritime 2050, and supports the work of the Maritime Skills Commission (MSC).

Adding £116 billion to the UK economy, more than rail and air combined, maritime facilitates 95% of UK global trade, worth over £500 billion a year.² More than 9 out of 10 goods leaving and entering the UK are transported by sea, including half of our food and a quarter of our energy.³

Maritime enables economic regeneration throughout our coastal communities, since many of our businesses are based in towns and cities along the coast. Every £1 of maritime turnover unlocks a further £1.62 across the supply chain, generating prosperity across the breadth and length of the UK beyond the coast. This is money that grows local economies by enabling trade, driving innovation and creating new jobs.⁴

Maritime supports 1.1 million jobs. These are high-skill jobs that pay 30% above the UK average salary. The maritime workforce is also 45% more productive than the average UK worker.⁵





Recommendations

People



- Provide easily accessible pathways into maritime employment by developing new apprenticeship standards.
- Support lifelong learning opportunities to redeploy existing skilled workers into the maritime workforce with the green skills needed for a just transition.
- Ensure delivery of impartial career guidance to young people in schools by including maritime qualifications in the curriculum.
- Engage with the Maritime Skills Commission to fully deliver its recommendations, promoting and expanding maritime professional opportunities.
- Review taxation policies to increase the competitive offer of maritime careers and support seafaring employment in the domestic and international sectors.
- Ensure time-limited regulated access to non-UK resident labour to secure operational continuity and train UK-based apprentices for future employment.

Infrastructure



- Extend permitted development rights in coastal areas to enable the development of green infrastructure within port boundaries.
- Enable more coastal areas to seize the benefits of freeports including streamlined planning rules, infrastructure funding, and low-cost investment incentives.
- Invest in a national programme to fund green maritime infrastructure development at ports and on inland waterways.
- Fund the infrastructure upgrades necessary to increase the capacity of the national grid, and ensure that UK ports are connected to energy networks.
- Enable UK shipbuilding to seize opportunities for new vessels created by offshore wind across Europe.

Green Fuels



- Increase funding for green fuels available under the UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions.
- Unlock private investment in green fuels development by increasing capital allowances, introducing green tax credits, and removing VAT on maritime fuels.
- Establish a separate fund to recycle revenues generated by the extension of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme back into maritime.



People

People are a fundamental part of maritime. We need to attract, train and retain the next generation of workers to preserve our maritime heritage and safeguard the UK's position as the world's sixth largest economy.

Training homegrown talent

It is vital that the maritime sector has a strong pipeline of skilled workers in place throughout the entire economy.

The future government and industry must work together to address the causes behind skills shortages to build a large pool of homegrown talent. The provision of easily accessible pathways into maritime employment for young people - including degree apprenticeships and cadetships - is a cornerstone of this process, along with support for lifelong learning opportunities to redeploy existing skilled workers into the maritime workforce with the green skills needed for a just transition.

The maritime sector has a unique relationship with coastal communities, which often experience high levels of socio-economic deprivation. By providing accessible employment pathways and supporting lifelong learning, we can build a Coastal Powerhouse that nurtures technological innovation and delivers economic prosperity through the creation of high-skill and well-remunerated jobs.

Recruiting into maritime

Unbiased career advice to pupils in schools before the age of 16 is crucial to helping them make an informed decision about their future. However, schools often encourage academic education over technical opportunities. Compounded by rules in league tables rewarding schools with higher proportions of pupils progressing to university, this has contributed to skills shortages in the labour market over the years and maritime is no exception.

Over the next five years, the future government and industry need to convince more young people about the benefits and advantages of a career in maritime. The MSC carried out extensive work to identify barriers to recruitment opportunities in close collaboration with Maritime UK, the Department for Education (DfE), and the National Shipbuilding Office (NSO).

The establishment of the Skills Delivery Group by the NSO in January 2024 is a welcome step in the right direction, but we need to ensure there is genuine parity of esteem between academic and technical education in the provision of career advice to pupils. This would entail altering mechanisms rewarding schools for encouraging academic pathways, and more regular engagement with the MSC and industry stakeholders promoting maritime careers.

Ensuring operational continuity

While maritime is firmly committed to employing UK-based seafarers, recruitment is often unable to meet the current levels of seasonal and permanent work demand. For instance, maritime has experienced recruitment challenges on vessels involved in the construction and maintenance of offshore wind projects in UK territorial waters due, in large part, to the introduction of immigration rules restricting the employment of professionals from the European Economic Area (EEA). The termination of the Offshore Wind Workers Concession in April 2023 further underlined the need to address this issue. ⁶

Maritime is also acutely aware of the importance of retaining its existing workforce, particularly when facing increasing external pressures. On defence, the AUKUS partnership has brought about considerable opportunities to attract new UK-based workers into our shipbuilding enterprise. Whilst competition with two close allies is a force for good, the UK must take care to safeguard its sovereign capability and retain its skilled indigenous workforce in the face of increasing competition from abroad. One suggestion would involve reviewing taxation policies to increase the competitive offer of maritime careers and supporting seafaring employment in the domestic and international sectors.

The future government and the maritime sector need to agree a long-term strategy that enables businesses to have time-limited access to non-UK based skilled labour to ensure operational continuity in key industrial sectors, whilst industry commits to train today's apprentices and cadets to become our maritime professionals of tomorrow.





Infrastructure

Infrastructure is essential for efficient and safe maritime operations. We need to build the appropriate facilities to supply net zero vessels, while supporting the development of offshore wind. Getting this right will bring maritime closer to decarbonising and increase the UK's energy security.

Streamlining planning

Ports invest approximately £600 million a year on infrastructure, but the planning process remains a major barrier to development.⁷ Planning should be an enabler of green infrastructure development, not an obstacle to it.

Introducing secondary legislation to extend permitted development rights in coastal areas would be a good first step toward enabling development, but more ambitious action is required in the long term. Industry wants to work with the future government to make sure that a greater number of regions along our coastline can seize the advantages and opportunities available to freeports including streamlined planning rules, infrastructure funding, and low-cost investment incentives.

Funding green infrastructure

The uncertainty about future usage and adoption of green fuels undermines investor confidence in committing to new and alternative bunkering facilities, despite the long term environmental and economic benefits. This is a challenge to maritime's journey towards Net Zero that we must urgently address.

The future government will be in a unique position to help us overcome this obstacle by directly supporting the development of green maritime infrastructure. Several governments in maritime economies such as Norway and the Netherlands have already adopted a more direct approach by investing public money on this priority. The European Commission has launched the Innovation Fund, the world's largest net zero technology funding programme with a total budget of €40 billion between 2020 and 2030.⁸ The US Government has made \$3 billion available under the Clean Ports Program in the Inflation Reduction Act to fund zero emission equipment and infrastructure in US ports.⁹ The UK will need to show the same level of ambition, if it wishes to maintain its reputation as a leader in tackling climate change.

Increasing grid capacity and port connectivity

Maritime understands the importance of cutting its environmental footprint in order to achieve Net Zero by 2050.

The capacity of the national grid needs expanding beyond its current levels to accommodate the additional demand from clean propulsion alternatives such as shore power. At the same time, ports require adequate connectivity to the energy network both to decarbonise their own operations and supply net zero vessels.

The future government should give detailed consideration to prioritising maritime in the Connections Action Plan to produce a comprehensive strategy that delivers greater grid capacity and port connectivity. Maritime has expressed its willingness to provide a geographical breakdown of locations that require better access to energy networks, but the future government should directly support power upgrades through a dedicated fund to accelerate maritime decarbonisation.

Supporting offshore wind development

The offshore wind sector is delivering a greater share of the UK's energy supply mix with capacity targets of 50 GW by 2030 and 100 GW by 2050¹⁰. In light of its location at sea, its presence in coastal communities and its involvement throughout the lifecycle of offshore wind projects, maritime is uniquely placed to support the development of this energy resource.

In March 2023, Maritime UK's Offshore Wind Plan explained how maritime can contribute to its development and increase the UK's energy independence in a manner consistent with our environmental ambitions. The Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult estimates that offshore wind needs 309 new Service Operation Vessels by 2050 to maintain its rapidly expanding infrastructure across Europe.

The UK should seize this opportunity with the future government and maritime working together to boost the offer of our shipbuilding industry in this crucial sector, turbocharging investment and creating jobs in the process - both at sea and ashore.





Despite being one of the most carbon efficient modes of transport, shipping accounts for 3% of domestic greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing maritime's environmental footprint is a crucial step to the UK achieving Net Zero by 2050.

Extending public funding

The UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE) supported the research & development of clean maritime technologies with £206 million of government funding over the last three years. The Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition (CMDC) allocated £130 million of R&D match-funding to support the design and development of green alternatives for commercialisation, while the Zero Emission Vessel and Infrastructure (ZEVI) initiative made £77 million available in match-funding to support high technology readiness level research in clean maritime solutions close to commercialisation.

UK SHORE funding has allowed maritime to take on the challenge to decarbonise its operations with unprecedented enthusiasm, with the first round of the CMDC becoming quickly oversubscribed with bids for 225% of its budget. Looking ahead, the UK needs to increase the amount of public funding available under UK SHORE to enable maritime to make further progress in this journey.

Incentivising private investment

Unlocking private sector investment is equally important to accelerating the delivery of workable green fuels. The Financial Products Working Group co-chaired by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and Maritime London paved the way for the UK Maritime Decarbonisation Report, which put forward proposals to unlock the £75 billion required to enable the UK's shipping energy transition.

The UK should leverage on its position as a global financial hub to unlock the amounts of capital required to finance maritime decarbonisation, while taking care to avoid long-term distortions to competition. Given the international nature of maritime, we should build on reforms to Tonnage Tax to make sure the UK retains a competitive tax environment, whilst continuing to maximise export opportunities for UK-led green technology solutions.

The future government could provide greater clarity around green investment by introducing incentives for industry such as increased capital allowances, green tax credits, and abolishing VAT on the sale of maritime fuels.

Making the UK ETS work for maritime

Maritime has always understood the role of market-based measures in providing the economic incentives needed to drive momentum in the adoption of clean energy resources.

While the extension of the UK Emissions Trading System (ETS) to cover domestic maritime emissions generated by vessels above 5,000 gross tonnes from 2026 will make a significant contribution, the future government should ringfence any funds generated from its increased scope for reinvestment into maritime.

This will drive further emissions reductions, directly financing the deployment of green fuels through the establishment of a separate fund to recycle UK ETS revenues back into the maritime sector.

According to HM Treasury estimates, this extension is forecast to raise approximately £310 million over three years starting from 2026-27.¹¹ This would provide a financial facility to encourage the take-up of green fuels, whilst being able to support the delivery of green skills needed to secure a just transition.

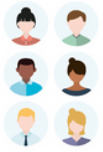


References

- 1 Transport Committee (2023), [Maritime 2050: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report](#)
- 2 Centre for Economics and Business Research (2022), [State of the Maritime Nation 2022](#), p. 2
- 3 Centre for Economics and Business Research (2022), [State of the Maritime Nation 2022](#), p. 2
- 4 Centre for Economics and Business Research (2022), [State of the Maritime Nation 2022](#), p. 2
- 5 Centre for Economics and Business Research (2022), [State of the Maritime Nation 2022](#), pp. 16, 27, 52
6. UK Visas and Immigration (2023), [Guidance: Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017](#)
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8. European Commission (2023), [Innovation Fund](#)
9. United States Congress (2022), [Inflation Reduction Act of 2022](#), pp. 248-249
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11. HM Treasury (2023), [Autumn Statement 2023](#), p. 85

We champion and work to enable a thriving maritime sector

Maritime UK National Priorities



People

We want to attract, train and retain the next generation of workers to build a solid pipeline of homegrown talent, enabling us to preserve the UK's maritime heritage and drive business growth.



Innovation

We want to promote deliverable solutions to the main challenges facing our maritime industries by facilitating collaboration between stakeholders from industry, government and academia.



Regions

We want to build a Coastal Powerhouse that will unleash economic prosperity and drive social mobility by creating a network of regional maritime clusters that foster cooperation between industry, local government and educational institutions.



Infrastructure

We want to build the infrastructure required to supply the next generation of green vessels and maximise our sector's contribution to the development of offshore wind, speeding up maritime decarbonisation and increasing UK energy security in the process.



Environment

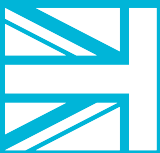
We want to bring about the deployment of green fuels and speed up the decarbonisation of the maritime sector, enabling the UK to reach Net Zero before the middle of the twenty-first century.



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