
**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

Second Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean
Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response
to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)

REMPEC/WG.58/INF.3
18 October 2024
Original: English

Lija, Malta, 21 November 2024

Agenda Item 6: Coordination/Synergy Activities

PROJECT “METAVASEA: People-Centered Transition for Maritime Decarbonization in the East Mediterranean

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Delegates are encouraged to consult the document in its electronic format and limit printing.

Note by the HELMEPA

The document provides information on the METAVASEA Project, coordinated by HELMEPA.

Background

1. The METAVASEA project (www.helmepa.gr/metavasea), is an ambitious five-year collaborative initiative implemented between October 2023 and September 2028. It is coordinated by the Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMPEPA), a historic non-profit making NGO based in Athens, in cooperation with 6 partners, 12 associate partners and 60+ maritime stakeholders in Greece, Cyprus and the East Mediterranean, with the kind support of Lloyd's Register Foundation LRF).
2. METAVASEA, named after the Greek word for transition, aims to map the existing infrastructure and new skills required for the decarbonization of shipping in the East Mediterranean, as well as to empower seafarers, port workers and maritime executives through the development of flexible training tools for reskilling and retraining. These objectives will be achieved through the training and retraining of 1,500 seafarers, port workers and maritime professionals on issues related to new fuels, enhancing safety on ships and in ports, digital transition, soft skills, environmental leadership, and awareness-raising for the protection of the marine environment.
3. Additional objectives are to enhance the participation of shipping companies and port organizations in decarbonization initiatives, measure the level of preparedness of shipping and coastal communities in the use of new fuels, identify related opportunities, gaps and challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean, prevent maritime accidents by improving operational efficiency in ship and port operations, and raise awareness among 10,000 students, 750 teachers and about 2 million residents of the Eastern Mediterranean.
4. Key initiatives of the project are a research study on maritime decarbonization in the Eastern Mediterranean, the mapping of the necessary skills and competencies, the development of training/reskilling/ upskilling material and toolkits, as well as a wide range of dissemination, communication and outreach activities aimed at all key stakeholders.
5. The project concluded its first year of implementation at the end of September 2024, and the results are presented below.

Research Study on Maritime Decarbonization in Eastern Mediterranean

6. The research study includes four elements. A survey of five key stakeholder groups (shipping companies, seafarers, civil society and port cities, service providers and suppliers, port administrators), a comparative analysis between the European Union and other regions, a private and social cost-benefit analysis for ports, ships and marine communities, and a gap analysis on maritime decarbonization infrastructure.
7. While all the elements are under development, the response and reach of the online survey over the first couple of months of implementation has been significant. More than 700 responses have been collected to date, while more than 20,000 individuals have been exposed to the surveys, and informed on alternative fuels, decarbonization, sustainability and ESG, as well as climate change impacts, risks and challenges.
8. Although the first set of results is expected by the end of 2024, the questionnaire will be online and active for the duration of the project, and at predefined intervals they will be utilized to update the findings and monitor developments (from both a technological and perception perspective) in maritime decarbonization.

9. Links to the METAVASEA survey questionnaire (in English) can be found hereunder:
 - i. [Port administrators](#)
 - ii. [Seafarers](#)
 - iii. [Shipping companies](#)
 - iv. [Civil society – coastal communities](#)
 - v. [Marine suppliers and service providers](#)

Mapping of Necessary Skills and Competencies

10. This project task focuses on identifying the skills gap crucial for implementing a decarbonization strategy in the maritime sector, using a 'bottom-up' approach. It includes a thorough assessment of the needs of both onboard and onshore personnel and aims to identify emerging skills and competencies required in the evolving marine and maritime landscape. The study, which will be completed in 2025, gathers insights through online surveys - having already collected over 500 responses from onboard and onshore personnel - along with focus groups and interviews with industry stakeholders. The survey explores key technical, safety, sustainability, and organizational skills for seafarers and office personnel, necessary to effectively support decarbonization strategies in the coming years. In total, over 200 maritime and marine organizations in Greece, Cyprus, and the wider East Mediterranean, as well as more than 1,000 active seafarers and office employees, will participate and provide their valuable insights.

Development Of Training / Reskilling / Upskills Material and Toolkits

11. The training materials and toolkits are divided under 7 themes:
 - i. Enhanced safety culture for maritime decarbonization
 - ii. Emerging technologies, digital awareness and cybersecurity in shipping
 - iii. Marine environmental awareness
 - iv. Environmental leadership
 - v. Soft skills
 - vi. New skills for maritime decarbonization
 - vii. Bridge resource management and soft skills
12. The development of these topics is progressing well, and during the project's first year, the initial six workshops, webinars, and training sessions were successfully conducted. These six sessions have significantly contributed to raising awareness and expanding knowledge on maritime decarbonization among a total of 688 participants, including seafarers, port workers, and office personnel. of 57 shipping companies and maritime organizations from the East Mediterranean.
13. The success of these training activities, as reflected in the feedback from participants through HELMEPA Academy's digital platform, is largely attributed to the lecturers and speakers from leading maritime organizations and companies. This highlights the commitment and support of the project's stakeholders. Specifically, the six training sessions conducted in the first year were:
 - i. Workshop: Enhanced Safety Culture for Maritime Decarbonization (speakers/lecturers from HELMEPA, the Institute of Oceanography, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, the Marine Engineering Laboratory of National Technical University of Athens, Lloyd's Register, and Premium Consulting).
 - ii. Webinar: Emerging Technologies, Digital Awareness, and Cybersecurity in Shipping (speakers/lecturers from World Maritime University, ORIANI, and Danaos Shipping)
 - iii. Masterclass: Environmental Leadership (speakers/lecturers from Athina maritime

- iv. Training and Development Center, Minerva Dry Inc., and Knowl Social Enterprise for Life-long Learning
 - iv. Webinar: Accident Prevention: Managing Risks/Sharing Knowledge (speakers/lecturers from Lloyd's Register)
 - v. Webinar: Decarbonizing Shipping-Getting Closer to 2030 (speakers/lecturers from DNV, EMICERT, GARD P&I, University of Piraeus, and the American Bureau of Shipping)
 - vi. Webinar: Navigating the Future: Safety First (speakers/lecturers from Bureau Veritas, Lloyd's Register, and HELMEPA)
14. Throughout the duration of the METAVASEA project more than 45 seminars, workshops and webinars are planned to take place, while at the same time e-learning courses will be developed and offered to the maritime community.
 15. It is important to note that all training webinars, seminars and workshops are in English and free of charge, while participating officers and maritime professionals receive certificates of attendance by HELMEPA's Maritime Training Centre.

Dissemination, Communication & Outreach Activities

16. Throughout the project's first year, over 160 articles, posts, and events have featured and highlighted the METAVASEA project. It is estimated that the project, along with its initiatives and objectives, reached more than 400,000 individuals. Key outreach efforts and milestones include the project's inclusion, initiated by the U.S. Department of State, as one of the 50 new projects of the Green Shipping Challenge, its presentation at COP23 by Prof. Michael Scoullas (MIO-ECSDE President & HELMEPA Scientific Advisor), the visit of Mr. Arsenio Dominguez (IMO Secretary General) to HELMEPA's premises, Mr. Max Mejia's (WMU President) visit during HELMEPA's Training Committee Meeting, wide participation and engagement by the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport (AASTMT), and HELMEPA's annual meeting with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), attended by representatives from 19 member shipping companies.
17. Throughout the duration of the project there are various activities planned that will engage both maritime stakeholders and the wider community, as well as increasing the acknowledgement of gender diversity and the important role of women in maritime decarbonization. During Posidonia 2024, WISTA Hellas organized its 1st seminar titled "A People-Centered Decarbonization Concept Beyond Sea Barriers", which featured women panel members from various maritime stakeholder groups, and focused on the gender perspective in the shipping industry while also taking into consideration the maritime decarbonization aspect.
18. Also, during Posidonia 2024 the METAVASEA TV spot on climate emergency premiered, a video which is now available on YouTube and will be broadcast on national television in Greece and Cyprus. Finally, during the first year, significant progress has been made in the Maritime Heritage Study called "Lessons Learned" regarding previous transitions of the shipping industry (expected to be complete in 2026). Specifically, the case studies explored during the first year focused on the expansion of the LNG fleet and how Greek seafarers adapted to the new technology, the transition from sail to steam and the purchase of the "Marietta Ralli", and the widespread introduction of user-friendly satellite communications onboard commercial vessels and the displacement of marine radio officers.

Conclusion

19. During the first year, over 117 shipping companies and maritime organizations from diverse stakeholder groups — including shipping, seafarers' unions, port authorities, suppliers and service providers, marine academies, academic institutions, and others — have actively participated in the project's activities, including specialized focus groups, training and reskilling seminars, and various events and initiatives. These stakeholders, from Greece, Cyprus, and other countries in the region, have provided valuable insights, information, and concerns, while also gaining exposure to the project's aims, objectives, and initiatives. Additionally, the first year of the project saw the establishment of significant connections and collaborations, most notably with the Lloyd's Register Maritime Decarbonization Hub, the Maritime Just Transition Task Force (which is coordinating the Seafarers' Training for Decarbonization project with IMO-WMU-ICS-ITF), the Global Maritime Forum, the Green Shipping Challenge of the U.S. Department of State and Norway, and the UN Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea.
20. The METAVASEA project is making significant progress toward its objectives, which include the training, upskilling, and reskilling of 1,500 seafarers and maritime professionals; increasing understanding of alternative fuel types and their associated hazards and challenges; cultivating soft skills among seafarers and professionals; improving the engagement of ports in maritime decarbonization efforts; identifying region-specific opportunities, gaps, and obstacles related to maritime decarbonization in the East Mediterranean; reducing risks in decision-making at international, regional, and local levels, as well as for shipping companies and ports; enhancing the efficiency of onboard and port operations to minimize accidents; and, ultimately, raising climate awareness among 10,000 schoolchildren, 750 teachers, and 2,000,000 residents of the region.
21. The Meeting is invited to take note of the information provided in the present document and contribute to METAVASEA by forwarding this information to maritime stakeholders in their countries encouraging them to provide input.
22. Learn more about the project at www.helmepa.gr/metavasea and contact HELMEPA for further synergy opportunities at training@helmepa.gr