



*Pictured: three pillars holding up a load. The ICS regards the three pillars of shipping's decarbonisation as fuel, infrastructure, and people.*

## The three pillars of shipping's decarbonisation: fuels, infrastructure, and people

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As we look to the future, decarbonisation remains the defining challenge and opportunity for global shipping. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has set ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and there is no doubt that the world is watching. Shipping, which underpins 90% of global trade, has a pivotal role to play not just in reducing its own emissions but in enabling the wider world's transition to green energy.

The stakes are high, and the work is urgent. We are not looking at a single solution but a transformation that will impact every aspect of shipping. To achieve success, we must pursue a three-pronged approach: fuels, infrastructure, and people. These three pillars must be strengthened simultaneously. Focusing on one while neglecting the others will risk slowing the pace of progress or failing to meet global ambitions.

### Unlocking Green Energy Potential

The fuel transition is at the heart of our decarbonisation journey. As we look ahead, it's clear that alternative

fuels—such as hydrogen, ammonia, and biofuels—will play a critical role in powering the ships of the future. With 50% of all green fuels expected to move by sea, shipping itself becomes not only a consumer of these fuels but also an enabler for decarbonisation across all sectors.

However, the challenge lies in making these fuels available, affordable, and safe. The production of alternative fuels at scale remains limited, and the infrastructure to supply them across global trade routes is in its infancy. This is where industry and government must work hand in hand. Australia's leadership in green hydrogen projects is encouraging, and its potential as a major exporter of clean fuels sets a compelling example for others.

What we need now is coordinated action to scale up production, drive down costs, and establish certainty for shipowners and operators investing in new fuel technologies. At the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) we have advocated for a 'levy-based' GHG contribution by ships, per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e emitted. This concept, proposed

in 2019, which has two key purposes; to reduce 'cost gap' between zero/near zero fuels and conventional fuels and incentivise accelerated uptake; and significantly, to provide billions of dollars to support the transition in developing economies. There is strong support for this from a clear majority of IMO Members States, which also control most of the world's shipping tonnage.

Our concept remains firmly on the table and we will be working with governments ahead of the MEPC meetings this year to establish further clarity and ensure that the IMO can reach an agreement in 2025. There is no room for delay—investment decisions made today will determine the readiness of our fleets to meet the IMO's targets in the years to come.

### Building Infrastructure for a Green Transition

What has become clear is that shipping cannot decarbonise alone. It requires a supply chain fit for a zero-carbon future, and ports are central to this effort. The Clean Energy Marine Hubs (CEM-Hubs) initiative, launched by ICS, the International Association of Ports