

“What we have today doesn’t bring us where we want to be.”

Participant in the Danish Maritime Forum.



A level global playing field is a precondition for the maritime industry’s success and the maritime world is blessed to have a truly global regulatory body in the IMO. This view was shared across all working groups. However, the groups also agreed that decision-making in the IMO is too slow and inefficient, and that the slow pace of ratification of international conventions and rules is a real problem for the industry, sometimes making new rules obsolete even before they are implemented. Moreover, for many in the industry, the IMO is a “black box”: they have little understanding of the complex formal and informal processes that go into formulating global rules within the IMO or what critical factors affect regulatory output.

Fragmentation and a lack of a common vision were the most commonly cited barriers to the creation of a sustainable governance framework for the industry. While there have been some good examples of industry leadership in the development of policy solutions, divergent and competing interests can make it difficult to engage effectively on common challenges. Some groups also pointed to a lack of transparency and sharing of critical information as a barrier to change. Others highlighted the need for the uniform enforcement of agreed-upon rules. Several groups discussed the role of the shift in global power from nation states to mega cities, viewing this as both an opportunity and a challenge. While cities might prove nimbler in developing and implementing new policies, this might result in a more complex and fragmented policy landscape for the industry to navigate. Another group debated the role of cargo owners in driving change.

Ideas to take forward

- Form an industry leadership alliance - a coalition of the willing - to advance collaboration, transparency and high standards across the industry and

proactively engage with policy makers on the regulatory landscape of the future. Speaking with one voice, its objective would be to deliver proposals that make broad, strategic sense. The group would consist of representatives from across the maritime value chain including sector-specific organizations including the International Chamber of Shipping, INTERTANKO, BIMCO, INTERCARGO, and the World Shipping Council.

- Improve data and information sharing across the value chain to increase transparency related to performance. This would serve to guide policymakers and improve environmental performance and awareness, while increasing efficiency and profitability and reducing costs.
- Use trade-wide, global forums to help spread knowledge, exchange ideas and advance issues.

Way forward

As discussions built on ideas discussed during the 2014 Forum, several groups were eager to take concrete action to ensure that solutions being proposed were turned into concrete, implementable actions. Several groups suggested establishing a governance working group to be set up under the auspices of the Forum to work up an action plan and next steps.

Other concrete proposals included presenting an industry paper to the IMO on smart regulation developed by the International Chamber of Shipping, industry participation to the UNFCCC’s COP21 and the reinvigoration of IMO’s Ship/Port working group with an appropriate industry interface.

Several groups also proposed the development of a common, acceptable framework for information sharing in the industry.