



# IFSMA

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## Strategic Plan



2024 - 2029





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# Maintaining Course and Speed

## – IFSMA Strategic Plan 2024 to 2029 –

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

IFSMA was formed in 1974 by eight National Shipmasters' Associations to unite the world's serving Shipmasters into a single professional co-ordinated body. It is a non-profit making, apolitical organisation dedicated solely to the interests of the serving Shipmaster and to uphold International Standards of Professional Competence of Seafarers commensurate with the need to ensure Safe Operational Practices, Preservation from Human Injury, Protection of the Marine Environment and Safety of Life and Property at Sea. The final draft Strategic Plan with the 5 Key Challenges as its core was approved by the IFSMA Biennial General Assembly, in Tokyo, on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

With its Headquarters in London, IFSMA's Secretariat is located close to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) where it was granted Consultative Status in 1975. This Consultative Status as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) enables the Federation to represent the views and protect the interests of the serving Shipmaster, unfettered and unfiltered either by National Governments or by Shipping Companies. To enable IFSMA to function effectively at IMO, it is represented by the Secretary General and a team of members' representatives who attend the four main Committees, namely the Maritime Safety Committee; the Maritime Environmental Protection Committee; the Legal Committee and the Facilitation Committee. This team is also active in the nine Sub-Committees of IMO, their Working and Drafting Groups as well as attending the Council Meetings and Assemblies.

In February 1993, IFSMA was placed on the International Labour Office's (ILO) special list of Non-Governmental International Organisations with observer status.

IFSMA has a history of submitting relevant papers on various aspects to the Committees and Sub-Committees of IMO which often result in successful debates leading to MSC Circulars and improvements in various instruments. IFSMA is a strong supporter of IMO in its quest for safer shipping and cleaner oceans. It is the desire of The Federation to assist IMO in achieving a truly global implementation and rigorous enforcement of its International Treaties so that there is no need for any Country to resort to Regulatory Measures on either a National or a Regional basis.

IFSMA Members are provided with the facility to access the IMO Documents Website for research and information purposes and, with prior consultation may join the IFSMA delegation in Committee and Sub-Committee sessions. IFSMA frequently needs Subject Matter Experts to assist them in IMO Working, Drafting and Correspondence Groups and this, importantly, enables shipmasters to articulate and share their views and practical experience with the rule makers.

At the ILO, consisting of a tripartite of Governments, Shipowners and Trade Unions, IFSMA's best interests are led by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and only attends relevant meetings when resources allow.

Generally, all Shipmasters who are in possession of an Internationally recognised Certificate of Competency, issued by the Government of an established maritime nation who are serving, or have previously served, in command of seagoing ships whether or not engaged upon International or Domestic Trade, are eligible for membership of IFSMA through a National Shipmasters' Association.

Exceptionally, where there is no National Shipmasters' Association, an individual shipmaster may be accepted for membership by the Executive Council if it considers that the individual would bring benefit to the Federation and would be prepared to try and form a new National Shipmasters' Association. Assistance in how this is best achieved, will be given by a current member association. The Federation now represents over 11,500 Shipmasters from more than 60 Countries either through their National Associations or as Individual Members.

## 2.0 GOVERNANCE

The responsibility for the efficient running of IFSMA is vested in the Executive Council which comprises a President, a Deputy President and ten Vice Presidents, who are elected by the members. They shall hold office for a term of four years before being eligible for re-election with no limit on the number of terms held. The President is the Chief Executive of the Federation and shall be responsible for fulfilling its Aim and Purposes and shall coordinate and activate the work of the Federation.

The Secretariat, led by the Secretary General, is the core of IFSMA and is responsible for the day-to-day running and efficient management of the Federation.

## 3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

IFSMA's mission is: "To be an independent, apolitical and financially viable organisation dedicated to representing the views and professional interests of the serving Shipmaster on the International Stage at the IMO and upholding the International Standards of Professional Competence for Seafarers."

## 4.0 VISION STATEMENT

IFSMA's Vision is to represent the Shipmaster effectively on the International Stage at the IMO and to communicate with the Member Associations so that they are more actively involved in the day-to-day dealings of IFSMA at the IMO.

## 5.0 AIM

IFSMA's Aim is to represent in one professional body the Shipmasters of the World, to safeguard professional standards and interests in all maritime matters in order to enable Shipmasters to carry out their responsible duties in an acceptable and competent manner.

To achieve this, the Federation should:

- Provide a proactive input on all professional issues affecting its Members.
- Provide Members with information on all activities conducted on their behalf with regular updating on developments.
- Seek the views of Members and to encourage the sharing of information.
- Encourage Members' participation with the IFSMA delegation at IMO Meetings.
- Participate to the fullest extent in all relevant international fora where issues affecting Shipmasters are discussed.
- Provide a high quality, cost effective service to Members.
- Ensure, where possible, that Policies and Objectives determined by Members at the General Assembly and by the Executive Council are implemented.
- Cooperate with other like-minded organisations with a view to forging strategic links to expand the influence and support for IFSMA.
- Maintain the highest level of involvement with agencies on maritime issues relevant to the profession of Shipmasters.
- Maintain and enhance the high international standing of qualifications and training standards of Shipmasters.
- Provide assistance and support to Member Associations on professional matters
- Recruit and retain Member Associations.
- Seek additional sources of income to keep the cost to members to a minimum whilst resourcing the optimum number of secretariat staff.

## 6.0 KEY CHALLENGES

In formulating this Strategic Plan, the Executive Council identified Five Key Challenges that IFSMA has to face in the future. This was presented to and agreed by Members at the 2023 Biennial General Assembly. These Challenges are to:

### 6.1 Skills and Competence of Ships' Crews.

- Learn from our membership where crews are lacking in practical skills and competence.
- Influence STCW amendments where necessary and be fully engaged with the Comprehensive Review of STCW at the IMO.
- Enable Shipmasters to be more available to undertake their training and mentoring responsibilities.

### 6.2 Criminalisation of the Shipmaster.

- Influence International Regulations to reduce the incidence of Criminalisation of the Shipmaster.

### 6.3 Operation of Ships of the Future.

- Encourage members' Shipmasters to purchase the newly issued Shipmasters' Legal Protection Insurance Scheme.
- Influence the use and development of Ships of the Future.
- Influence the Role of the Shipmaster, both on-board and ashore.
- Influence the regulation of Ships of the Future and, in particular, the development of regulation of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) at IMO and other International Bodies.

### 6.4 Safety Management.

- Influence the regulation of Standards of Competence for the Maritime Workforce of the future.
- Promote the removal of Shipmasters from the Watchkeeping Roster so that they are able to fulfill their responsibilities as Master, as required by International Legislation and, at the very least, influence removal of the Shipmaster from the Master/Mate 6 on, 6 off roster by the implementation of improved Deck Officer Manning Levels in ships.
- Raise awareness and reduce the Administrative Burden of the Shipmaster.
- Bring to the attention of the shipping industry its responsibilities to meet the objectives of the ISM Code.

### 6.5 Public Relations and Communications

- IFSMA should be seen as the International Voice for Shipmasters.
- Encourage the sharing of information between Shipmasters.
- Represent the professional views of the Shipmaster at the IMO and other International Bodies, based on the practical and operational knowledge of our Shipmaster Members.

These five Key Challenges are multi-faceted. How IFSMA intends taking each one of these Challenges forward is outlined below.

## 7.0 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The foundation of the sustainability of IFSMA into the future is very clearly the deep-rooted and current knowledge of our 11,500 Shipmaster Members both onboard and ashore.

To harness this knowledge in our rapidly changing maritime environment IFSMA must ensure it reaches out to its Members to share information and knowledge.

The sharing of information and knowledge shall become one of the core foundations of IFSMA so that best practice in every aspect of the Shipmasters' role can be shared between its members and at the IMO and other International Bodies.

To achieve this IFSMA aims to:

- Regularly publish and distribute a Newsletter to its Members.
- Survey Members to obtain their views on specific topics.
- Set up Virtual Working Groups with a selected Shipmaster Association as Chair and Members from other Associations around the world to better represent Shipmaster issues at the IMO.
- Continually seek to improve the image of IFSMA with Members, external bodies and opinion formers.
- Proactively enhance the reputation of IFSMA as the premier source of information and informed comment on a wide range of maritime and related matters specific to Shipmasters.
- Maintain and enhance the IFSMA website.
- Initiate, develop and enhance IFSMA campaigns on issues of importance to Members.
- Represent Members at external bodies such as ILO, IMO, and EU to progress IFSMA policies and protect Members' interests which the available staff and financial resource allows.
- Lobby International Organisations and Inter-Governmental Agencies to progress IFSMA policies and protect Members' interests.
- Organise campaigns amongst the membership and/or the public and/or other groups, to progress IFSMA policies and protect Members' interests.

## 8.0 ADMINISTRATION & FINANCES

- Seek to grow IFSMA through a proactive recruitment strategy aimed at maximising membership amongst Shipmaster Associations and expand the membership base.
- Ensure adequate numbers and quality of staff are employed and procedures put in place to maintain and provide an effective, efficient service to all Members, visitors and colleagues.
- Ensure Members' correspondence is answered expeditiously.
- Provide equipment, which will enable staff to produce work in an effective, efficient and professional manner to reflect the high standards of IFSMA.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities to Members, visitors and colleagues.
- Ensure that Health and Safety requirements in and around the Office are met and, when necessary, work place risk assessments undertaken.
- Ensure the financial strength of IFSMA is maintained and great care exercised to ensure that the decisions on financial matters (e.g. levels of subscriptions) are taken sufficiently far in advance to ensure that the financial base is not eroded.
- Maintain Reserves, as agreed by the Executive Council, which should be recalculated annually and protected from inflation.
- Maintain adequate financial resources to be made available for the timely replacement and upgrading of equipment, furniture and buildings.
- Recognise the effect of membership numbers both on the level of subscription income and on costs be kept under continuous close scrutiny.
- Seek additional sources of income to supplement membership income.

## 9.0 SUMMARY

Training and mentoring has never been more important as increasing technology is being used to drive the reduction in the numbers in ships' increasingly multi-national/multi-cultural crews. This has led to continuously evolving complex shipboard systems, of varying degrees of autonomy, which vary from ship to-ship, even within the same Shipping Company. This requires different training for similar systems and the default is frequently self-taught on-board/on-job training which can often be a major distraction as well as leading to dangerous practice.

Today's Shipmaster is often caught up in watchkeeping, overburdened with administration and therefore unable to fulfil the traditional Shipmaster's role of overseeing the training and mentoring of their crews and, in particular, the Shipmasters of the future.

IFSMA will strive to have the Shipmaster removed from watchkeeping duties particularly the 6-on/6-off Master Mate system to enable Shipmasters to carry out their Internationally legislated responsi-

bilities in an acceptable and competent manner.

Mentoring is becoming a forgotten skill at sea and IFSMA will encourage National Shipmaster Associations to help reinvigorate what should be a routine aspect of shipboard life.

Nations are becoming increasingly litigious and there appears to be a trend to prosecute the first person in the firing line. There is a significant amount of focus on the maritime environment as it has an enormous impact on every aspect of our life.

Shipmasters are the frontline representative of the Shipowners and flag States and often, through no fault of their own, are criminalised for violation of regulations of which they have no control.

IFSMA will be unerring in its efforts to influence International Regulations to reduce the incidence of Criminalisation of the Shipmaster and must continue to work with the insurance industry to provide a “Shipmasters’ Legal Protection Scheme” that is affordable and attractive to all Shipmasters and other key onboard Seafarers.

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### **IFSMA Founding Associations**

Association Nationale des Officiers et Marine du Commerce, Le Maillon, Paris, France

Collegio Nazionale Patentati Capitani L.C. e D.M., Genoa, Italy

The Irish Institute of Master Mariners, Dublin, Ireland

Koninklijk Belgisch Zeemanscollege, Antwerp, Belgium

Nederlandse Vereniging van Kapiteins ter Koopvaardij, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Norges Skipsførerforbund, Oslo, Norway

The Society of Master Mariners South Africa, Cape Town, South Africa

Verband Deutscher Kapitäne und Schiffsoffiziere, Hamburg, Germany



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