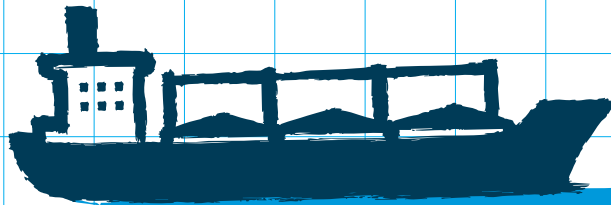




GLOBAL
MARITIME
FORUM



Shared seas

Shifting horizons

变换之界, 共享深蓝

Global Maritime Forum
Annual Summit 2026

全球海事论坛
年度大会 2026



Shanghai, China
21-22 October

中国·上海
10月21-22日



Shared seas, shifting horizons

The world today looks very different from when the Global Maritime Forum held its inaugural Summit eight years ago; it's even changed markedly since our last gathering in Antwerp in 2025. Not only is the maritime industry contending with a slow but steady shift away from a rules-based order, but recent events have served as a reminder of how quickly maritime operations can be disrupted by outside forces.

The alliances and free trade paradigm that underpinned global commerce for decades are fracturing, and protectionism is displacing multilateralism. This is having a direct impact on seaborne trade, with the International Maritime Organization increasingly affected by politics and the right to safe passage jeopardised by armed conflict.

Yet the seas themselves remain shared, and so must the frameworks that guide them. The sector's goals of accelerating the energy transition, protecting seafarers, and reining in the dark fleet depend on all actors operating on the same page. These goals also rely on leaders from across geographies and the maritime value chain coming together to tackle shared challenges and forge coalitions, not just of the willing but of the committed.

What does today's immense, system-wide shift look like for an industry as interconnected as global seaborne trade and how can the sector's leaders plan for a sustainable, resilient future while navigating horizons that are changing faster than our frameworks can follow?

At the Annual Summit in Shanghai, 220 C-suite executives and other leading voices from across the maritime value chain will explore this difficult question in all its complexities, focusing on how collaborative efforts can overcome sector-wide challenges.

What we'll discuss in Shanghai



The Annual Summit 2026 in Shanghai will focus on three themes central to the future of seaborne trade. Within each theme, the Summit will bring together industry leaders, policymakers, experts, and other key voices to discuss different perspectives on topics and questions on the agenda.

Leading by example

When global institutions stall, new forms of leadership are needed. Individual companies, cross-value-chain collaborations, national governments, and regional cooperation can and must step up to fill the vacuum. By setting high standards and demonstrating what is possible, first movers can advance the sector's decarbonisation agenda, find new solutions for seafarer safety and well-being, and help move the sector beyond minimum compliance.

Topics:

- Scaling green corridors through public-private partnerships
- Technology leadership and industrial scaling in China and beyond
- Strategic infrastructure investment towards sustainability, resilience, and prosperity

Key questions:

- How can public-private collaboration and coalitions of the willing strengthen transparency, responsible behaviour at sea, and confidence in global maritime trade?
- How can our community lead the maritime sector beyond regulatory compliance to set the standards that will define a robust and competitive industry?
- What concrete steps will accelerate first-mover decarbonisation activities?

Equipping the sector for the future

Maritime trade stands at a turning point. Zero-emission fuels, automation, and AI are reshaping how the industry operates, policy frameworks are evolving at multiple speeds, and freedom of navigation is under strain. Preparing for this future means planning across multiple scenarios, identifying and managing risks, upgrading infrastructure, and retraining and upskilling maritime professionals.

Topics:

- The way forward for decarbonisation regulation
- Strengthening the supply chain and scaling the production of zero-emission fuels
- AI, efficiency, and human talent: responsible adoption and operational integration

Key questions:

- How can we best prepare for technological shifts while ensuring our workforce is equipped to thrive in a rapidly changing environment?
- How can we move from crisis management to adequately planning for multiple plausible futures?
- How should the sector prepare for emerging global policy requirements on biodiversity protection and water stewardship?

Trade in a time of rupture

The rules-based order on which shipping has long depended is under extreme pressure, while the same geopolitical forces reshaping the global order have now also reached the IMO. Regional wars have direct, concrete impact on shipping as key trade lanes have been closed and vessels have been attacked, while energy markets are being disrupted. An expanding segment of substandard shipping is exposing gaps in existing governance structures, while conflicts, trade wars, and tariffs have created an undercurrent of market uncertainty.

Topics:

- National security as a driver of trade and shipping policy
- Green energy as a new area of geopolitical competition
- Maritime workforce resilience in an age of geopolitical disruption

Key questions:

- How can maritime leaders best adapt business strategies when market access, supply chains, and operating conditions are shaped by geopolitical instability?

Coming together in one of the world's most important maritime hubs

Boasting many of the world's largest ports and nearly two-thirds of the global shipbuilding market, China's maritime scale, innovation, and leadership make it an ideal place to bring together decision-makers from across geographies and the maritime value chain for two days of debate, fresh perspectives, and agenda-setting. This year marks the first time that the Global Maritime Forum will hold its Annual Summit in mainland China. It has previously been held in Hong Kong, Singapore, London, New York, Athens, Tokyo, and Antwerp.

The Annual Summit 2026 is supported by Shanghai Maritime University, the People's Government of Hongkou District, and the Shanghai Municipal Transportation Commission.



Click on the video above to hear Global Maritime Forum CEO Johannah Christensen and Wah Kwong Maritime Transport Executive Chairman Hing Chao expand on the importance of holding the Summit in Shanghai.



Programme overview

WEDNESDAY, 21 OCTOBER

12:00 – 14:00
14:00 – 18:30

Arrival, registration, and networking lunch
Annual Summit programme



W Shanghai The Bund Hotel
No.66 Lvshun Road
Hongkou District
Shanghai, China, 200080

19:00 – 22:00

Summit dinner
in partnership with Baltic Exchange



Regent Shanghai On the Bund
60 Huangpu Rd
Hongkou District
Shanghai, China, 200082

THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER

08:30 – 09:00
09:00 – 17:00
17:00

Arrival and registration
Annual Summit programme
Closing reception



W Shanghai The Bund Hotel
No.66 Lvshun Road
Hongkou District
Shanghai, China, 200080

Practical information

PARTICIPATION

Participation in the Global Maritime Forum's Annual Summit is by invitation only. To confirm your participation, please contact summit@globalmaritimeforum.org.

The Annual Summit is highly collaborative, and to get the best experience, participants are encouraged to attend all sessions, as they will complement each other throughout the programme. All working sessions are conducted under the Chatham House Rule.

ACCOMMODATION

We encourage you to stay in one of the three Shanghai hotels that have been selected for your convenience: Regent Shanghai on the Bund, Bellagio by MGH Shanghai, and Bvlgari Hotel Shanghai.

LANGUAGE

The Annual Summit will be conducted in English, but simultaneous and consecutive Chinese translation will be provided.

PRESS

Selected sessions of the Global Maritime Forum's Annual Summit will be open to the press. Press-related inquiries should be directed to the Global Maritime Forum's Director of Communications, Rasmus Nord Jørgensen, at rnj@globalmaritimeforum.org.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To learn more, please visit www.globalmaritimeforum.org or contact us at summit@globalmaritimeforum.org.



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About the Annual Summit

The Global Maritime Forum's Annual Summit brings together around 220 C-suite leaders from across the maritime spectrum who are willing to address the industry's most pressing issues. Invitees are selected to ensure adequate representation of the maritime value chain and give each segment, geography, and stakeholder group a voice in the proceedings.

The Annual Summit primarily consists of workshop-style discussions that encourage participants to work in groups to seek collaborative responses to various challenges. The working sessions are supplemented by briefings with leading experts who will inspire and challenge the conversations, as well as a few keynote sessions and panel discussions featuring top government officials and business leaders.

The purpose of the Annual Summit is not merely to discuss industry issues but to catalyse collective initiatives that can increase sustainable long-term economic development and human well-being. The Annual Summit is thus highly collaborative, and all participants are invited to share, inspire, and learn.

About the Global Maritime Forum

The Global Maritime Forum is an international not-for-profit organisation committed to shaping the future of global seaborne trade. It works by bringing together visionary leaders and experts who, through collaboration and collective action, strive to increase sustainable long-term economic development and human well-being.

Established in 2017, the Global Maritime Forum is funded through a combination of grants and partner contributions. It operates independently of outside influence and does not support individual technologies or companies. Most of its roughly 55-person staff is based in the organisation's headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark.



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