“Call to Action for Shipping Decarbonization” Overview

A call for governments to take action to decarbonize shipping.

Based on the vision that shipping should be decarbonized by 2050 as an explicit goal, and that commercially available zero-emission ships and infrastructure for the production, distribution, storage and bunkering of zero-emission fuels should be developed quickly, the report foresees the need to achieve zero-emission ships by 2030 and to have at least 5% of international shipping using zero-emission fuels. It is necessary to achieve zero-emission ships by 2030 and to use zero-emission fuels in at least 5% of international shipping. To achieve this, it is essential for the private sector and governments to cooperate in the following areas.

1. Refining zero emission technologies to ensure safety, reliability, and sustainability

While the technologies needed to build zero emission vessels and produce zero emission fuels and propulsion systems exist, they need to be further developed to ensure that they are safe, clean, and reliable. This will require further refining both the vessel and fuel production technologies and creating clarity around safety, sustainability, regulation, training, fuel and vessel life-cycle analyses, and fuel availability, thereby reducing the risks associated with investing in zero emission vessels, infrastructure, and fuel production.

2. Implementing industrial scale demonstration projects involving the full value chain

We must implement industrial scale demonstration projects involving the full value chain. Such demonstration projects will show that zero emission shipping is viable at scale, while driving down costs and scaling up demand to enable broader deployment. Demonstration projects will entail higher risks and higher costs and will need to be de-risked through private sector collaboration, innovative business models, and government incentives.

3. Closing the competitiveness gap through policy action

Despite the potential to significantly reduce the cost of zero emission fuels over the coming decade, it will not be enough to close the competitiveness gap with fossil fuels. This means that the market alone will not be able to make zero emission shipping commercially viable at the required scale. By 2025, policy makers must therefore put in place clear, effective, and equitable policy frameworks, such as meaningful market-based measures, to make zero emission shipping commercially viable.

4. Unlocking global growth opportunities and synergies with other harder-to-abate sectors

Meeting the future demand for zero emission shipping will require massive investments, especially in the production of zero emission fuels. This creates new growth and job opportunities — not least in developing countries and emerging economies — that must be unlocked to achieve an equitable transition. As shipping decarbonization is part of the global energy transition, we must also work with other harder-to-abate sectors to reap synergies that can accelerate the transition by creating economies of scale and reducing risk.