



HONG KONG  
MARITIME AND PORT BOARD

香港海運港口局

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set up a Task Force on Maritime and Port Development Strategy to formulate an action plan to enhance Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre

**A**s announced in the 2023-24 Budget, a task force on Maritime and Port Development Strategy is set up by the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB), together with the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board (HKMPB) and representatives of high-end maritime services companies, will formulate an action plan by the end of 2023 on the following maritime cluster enhancement strategies.

- Enhancing the development of business sectors such as ship finance, marine insurance, maritime arbitration and ship management, thereby enabling Hong Kong to become a global leading high-end maritime service market;
- Facilitating transformation of global maritime and port business towards zero emission;
- Promoting the development of smart initiatives and digitalisation in the maritime industry; and
- Promoting exchanges and collaboration among maritime industries in the Greater Bay Area and those around the world.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR Government) has also earmarked HK\$20 million to expedite studies on the relevant strategies.





# HONG KONG'S OPENING TO THE WORLD OFFERS MARITIME TAX INCENTIVES MAJOR BOOST

**N**ow that Hong Kong is again open to the world following the Covid-19-induced hiatus, the full potential of generous tax incentives offered to the maritime industry is being unleashed. Primarily aimed at attracting businesses from overseas and the mainland to establish a presence in Hong Kong and enhance the maritime cluster overall, the HKSAR Government has incrementally introduced corporate rate tax cuts of 50% to various maritime sectors since 2020. Those already benefitting from the new rates include ship leasing companies, marine insurers, ship managers, ship agents, and ship brokers.

Today many targeted companies within the maritime sectors are already enjoying the immense benefits of the tax concessions. Among such beneficiaries is the Wallem Group. One of the world's most successful ship managers, Wallem Group recently celebrated its 120th anniversary and a 98-year presence in Hong Kong. As a ship manager and ship agent the Wallem Group is benefitting from the new tax arrangements twice over.

Asked to comment on the Government-led initiative Wallem Group CEO John-Kaare Aune said: "With the recently introduced tax concessions for maritime services in Hong Kong, our position as a key international maritime centre will continue to strengthen.

"The tax concessions will provide the energy to further enhance the vibrant maritime ecosystem in Hong Kong which Wallem has proudly been a part of for more than a century," he added.

"We are excited about the opportunities that this will bring to Wallem and the wider maritime community in Hong Kong."



John Kaare  
Aune chief  
executive  
Wallem  
Group

## HKSAR GOVERNMENT'S ONGOING COMMITMENT TO MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

**T**he HKSAR Government has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to manpower development for maritime, aviation and related sectors with the proposed injection to the Maritime and Aviation Fund of an additional HK\$200 million in 2023 (for a total commitment of HK\$500 million). Now in its ninth year of operation, the MATF has so far benefitted more than 16 000 students and in-service practitioners.

At present, there are 15 schemes under MATF, administered by the TLB, Marine Department, Vocational Training Council, and the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy, together with various education institutions.

Latest additional schemes include Local Vessel Competency Enhancement Scheme, Aviation Operations Training Incentive Scheme, and Maritime Training Support Scheme. In 2022 Policy Address it was announced that a new Maritime Services Traineeship Scheme will be launched under MATF this year. The scheme will incentivise participating companies to provide traineeship for young people who aspire to a career in maritime law. The aim is to nurture more home-grown maritime lawyers to serve our high value-added maritime cluster.

MATF funding has played an essential role in the promotion of Hong Kong's maritime cluster. MATF has supported industry organisations and professional organisations in a number of promotional and publicity activities which to date have been attended by nearly 65 500 participants.

This year the HKMPB successfully took part in the Education and Careers Expo, organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council on 2-5 February. This was the HKMPB's sixth outing at the Expo. Again HKMPB captured the interest of students and the general public who responded positively to a variety of eye-catching career videos on maritime professions, information panels and interactive maritime-themed game. Also on hand were maritime industry practitioners who offered exciting tales of real life experience at the frontline of the business and students from the Hong Kong Sea School who shared their learning experience in maritime studies.



Hong Kong has taken an important step in its progress toward the creation of a Smart Port for the city. Following the formation of a Task Force by the HKMPB in November 2021, the HKSAR Government has engaged a consultant to develop a Port Community System (PCS). The PCS facilitates communication and data access for terminal operators and related industry stakeholders to streamline operations, optimise multi-party coordination processes, further enhance port efficiency, and reduce cargo handling time and costs. The HKSAR Government is now working full steam ahead in this initiative, which was announced in the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address.

The plan is to launch the PCS through gradually rolling it out for different cargo delivery processes within this year. The system's effectiveness in facilitating communication and data access among terminal operators and relevant industry stakeholders will shortly be tested.

A user requirement survey began in Q3 2022 and will continue throughout 2023. The first trial of the system is local delivery process of incoming reefer cargo which covers the cargo flow from overseas loading port to the unloading port in Hong Kong, release of container at the terminal, delivery to the consignee and return of empty container to the depot.







# HKSAR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS JOIN HONG KONG SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

Leading HKSAR Government officials joined more than 500 global and local industry professionals, including a delegation led by Emanuele Grimaldi, the Chairman of International Chamber of Shipping, and representatives from fellow shipowner associations and various international and regional maritime organisations, in a glamorous high-energy celebration of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association (HKSOA) 65th anniversary. The long-anticipated Gala Dinner was held on 30 March.

As guest of honour, acting Financial Secretary of the HKSAR Government Michael Wong, led the many tributes to the achievements of the HKSOA. He also offered special thanks to the Association for its many years of collaboration with the HKSAR Government in formulating strategies for the enhancement of Hong Kong's status as a premier maritime centre. He stressed that the Government would continue to perform its role as "market facilitator" and "promoter" to provide a favourable business environment for the shipping industry to flourish.



## Upcoming Events

- 2023 Greater Bay Maritime Conference (Guangzhou) [19 May 2023]
- The Baltic and International Maritime Council Annual General Meeting (Hong Kong) [23-25 May 2023]
- Hong Kong Maritime Week 2023 (Hong Kong) [19-25 November 2023]
- Marintec China (Shanghai) [5-8 December 2023]