

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

CIL-CLIMA CONFERENCE ON THE DECARBONIZATION OF SHIPPING AND ALTERNATIVE FUELS

12 – 13 FEBRUARY 2025, SINGAPORE

The NUS Centre for International Law (CIL) and the Center for Climate Change Law and Governance (CLIMA) Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen welcome proposals for paper presentations for the conference ‘Decarbonization of Shipping and Alternative Fuels’, which will take place in **Singapore on Wednesday-Thursday, 12-13 February 2025.**

Conference Background and Overarching Questions

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) devised a Greenhouse Gas reduction Strategy in 2018 detailing its ambitions to decarbonize shipping. The latest iteration of the GHG Strategy was adopted by the IMO’s Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) in 2023 and is also known as the “2023 Strategy” or “Revised Strategy”. This strategy outlines a GHG emissions reduction target of achieving net-zero emissions based on 2008 baseline levels by 2050 and sets out interim checkpoints every decade in 2030 and 2040 respectively. It further states a timeline of short-term (2018-2023), mid-term (2025-2030), and long-term (beyond 2030) measures to implement the 2030 to 2050 emissions reduction targets.

As a key measure of the IMO’s envisaged package of mid-term measures, the research and development and eventual use of alternative fuels which are low- or zero-carbon in nature to substitute traditional bunker fuel oils onboard commercial ships is considered critically important by the IMO to achieve its climate change ambitions for shipping. However, there are several challenges to overcome to make the widespread adoption of alternative fuels feasible. First, the infrastructure required to support the ecosystem of alternative fuels has not reached maturity and is very costly. This includes the production and supply facilities for the manufacture of alternative fuels, shipyard and costs for retrofitting or building new ships, R&D for new engines running on or transporting alternative fuels, and the necessary training and upskilling of crew to operate new alternatively fueled vessels. The IMO has therefore envisaged a basket of technical and economic mid-term measures to reduce the cost gap between traditional and alternative fuels to incentivize uptake. That said, the economic measures is envisaged to result in the collection of funds and proceeds from the GHG pricing mechanism. Yet the institutional arrangement, and regulatory mechanisms for the management of such a “GHG” Fund is unclear in different connections. Second, the human safety and environmental implications of alternative fuels are fundamentally different from traditional fuel oils, and therefore the Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) and co-operation regimes (e.g, under the *International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation*) would have to be updated. Third, the fundamentally distinct physical properties of alternative fuels creates a gap where a spill of such fuels from ships (both for transport or bunker) falls outside existing liability and compensation regimes. Fourth, how can law and regulation (particularly international law) assist in unlocking efforts for cooperation and standard-setting for crew training and identifying gaps which need to be filled? And lastly, the use of alternative fuels creates cross-cutting and regulatory issues including the accessibility of Least Developed Countries to these new technologies and their capacity building or lack thereof, and the implications for IMO regulations moving forward.

The **CIL-CLIMA Conference on the Decarbonization of Shipping and Alternative Fuels** aims to examine the gaps in the applicable rules and regulations, and how they can be addressed to enable safe and equitable transition pathways towards net-zero through the adoption of alternative fuels. The rationale for this examination is that both industry and governments have started to invest heavily into the use of alternative fuels, and therefore have a common interest in promoting greater legal certainty around the regulatory regime applicable to alternative fuels. In addition, both industry and governments have an interest in the safety of alternative fuels to the health and welfare of seafarers.

Conference Themes

The conference is organized around thematic sessions addressing the legal and/or regulatory aspects of the following topics (non-exhaustive list):

- IMO Developments and Efforts after the 2023 GHG Strategy
- Technology & Safety,
- Pollution, Prevention, Response and Co-operation (PPRC)
- Liability & Compensation
- Crew Training
- Nuclear Powered Merchant Ships
- Just & Equitable Transition and Energy Justice
- Lifecycle Accounting
- Domestic and regional regulatory approaches
- Environmental Benefits and Disadvantages of Alternative Fuels
- Availability of Alternative Fuels Supply

This conference is **open to scholars with an interest in shipping, energy transition and climate change**. The conference will include papers presented by invited participants as well as authors selected through this call for abstracts. We aim to cover a diverse range of perspectives on and approaches to the conference theme, while ensuring a balanced representation of gender and levels of seniority. For that reason, we especially encourage **early career researchers** to submit proposals.

Submission of Proposals

Proposals should address specific questions related to the overall theme of the conference and proposals should include:

- An abstract (max. 350-words), with a clear research question/topic identified, along with a title, the author(s)'s name(s) and affiliation(s)
- A short biographical note / CV
- Contact information

Proposals should be submitted by the **1st of November 2024** to joel.ong@nus.edu.sg. Authors will be informed of the final decision by **the 15th of November 2024**.

Candidates whose proposals are selected will be expected to give a presentation on their topic during the Conference. Selected candidates will also be given the option to turn their proposals into articles for publication in a special issue of a journal to be submitted for publication in the last quarter of 2025.

Funding

There is no registration fee for selected candidates for the Conference. Meals, coffee, and refreshments will be provided for participants during the Conference. Accommodation for selected candidates will also be covered.

Travel costs to Singapore may be covered for speakers upon request and depending on the availability of funds. Please indicate if you need financial support for travel expenses when submitting your paper proposal.

The conference is supported by the **Singapore Maritime & Port Authority (MPA)** through the [MPA-CIL Oceans Governance Research Programme](#) funded by the Singapore Maritime Institute (SMI-2023-MA-03) and the **Carlsberg Foundation** through the Research Project [International Law-Making: Actors in Shipping and Climate Change \(InterAct\)](#).

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