

INTRODUCTION TO REPORTS

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY EXAMINATION OF
CARIBBEAN INTERESTS IN MARITIME
DECARBONISATION

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PREPARED BY



SHRIDATH
RAMPAL
CENTRE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW, POLICY AND SERVICES



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Foreword: By Dr. Jan Yves Remy, Project Director, Caribbean Shipping Lanes



As Director of the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services (SRC)—the Caribbean’s premier institution for training, research, and advocacy on trade issues—I consider it a privilege to lead the [Caribbean Shipping Lanes \(CSL\) Project](#) and an amazing team of professionals - Ms. Nafesha Richardson and Ms. Tianna Blades, CSL Research Fellows; Ms. Jaeda Sutherland, CSL Delegation Coordinator; Mrs. Desiree Evelyn, CSL Administrative Assistant - committed to the service of the region.

Given the region’s geopolitical positioning and high trade openness, the maritime sector plays a vital role in enabling the Caribbean to engage with the global economy. It facilitates the movement of goods, provides significant employment, and is integral to our identity and future as “large ocean states.” At the same time, climate change poses one of the most urgent existential threats to our region—one that, if not proactively addressed and transformed into opportunity, could have devastating consequences.

The intersection of maritime transport and climate change—particularly as framed by the [2023 IMO Strategy on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas \(GHG\) Emissions](#) from Ships—makes SRC uniquely positioned to house and nurture the technical expertise the region requires at this critical juncture in its development and resilience-building efforts.

Over the past year, the CSL team has been actively supporting and learning from our Caribbean negotiators at the IMO, identifying their evolving technical needs and ensuring our outputs respond directly to those needs. This compilation is a product of that process—evidence of the region’s growing expertise and a demonstration of our commitment to shaping a more sustainable and strategically engaged Caribbean maritime future.

While the IMO process continues to unfold, we are encouraged by the support of key stakeholders—including the United Nations Foundation, the University College London team, and various regional policymakers—who have guided and strengthened our work.

Our hope in commissioning these reports is to provide a tailored body of analysis that Caribbean negotiators and policymakers can use to meaningfully engage in IMO negotiations and evaluate their implications—not only on our international positioning

but also on domestic regulatory, legislative, and financing processes. These reports also serve to facilitate comparative learning from the approaches of other countries and regions involved in the same negotiations.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making this first compilation of reports on the IMO GHG Reduction Strategy for the Caribbean region a reality. I urge all stakeholders—across academia, government, and the private sector—to study the insights within these pages. It is only through informed, coordinated, and proactive engagement that our region can fully participate in, and positively shape, the negotiations that will significantly influence the Caribbean’s development trajectory.

Foreword: By Professor Tristan Smith, Director UMAS, UCL Energy Institute



The IMO's Revised Strategy, adopted in July 2023, sets in train the inevitability of shipping's decarbonisation (complete phase out of fossil fuel use) over the next 25 years. However that strategy only describes the GHG reduction pathway, and some principles to guide the subsequent policy measure design process that the strategy agreed should result in MARPOL amendments that are adopted by the end of this year.

That policy measure debate reaches its zenith during MEPC 83, when agreement in principle is needed. What is at stake in the policy measures debate is how costly and how just and equitable the decarbonisation of shipping will be. With shipping as the lifeblood of international trade, but for so many and especially those on islands, the vital enabler of current standards of living, these are both high stakes.

Done well, the sector will enjoy a smooth transition into new fuels, enabling long-run investment decisions, and strong support for low-income countries, particularly the climate vulnerable and those at risk of negative economic impacts. Done badly, and there will be a disruptive and expensive transition onto new fuels, stranded asset risks and technology lock-ins, and weak or no support for low income countries.

The best chance of getting a good outcome and minimising the worst, is for countries with important voices in the debate, such as those in the Caribbean region, to have the best available scientific evidence to inform their political decision. And that evidence needs to be developed through the lens of their regional circumstances and needs, as well as an appreciation of the overall global transition the region will sit within.

This is hard to produce for a debate which still has so many options on the table and such a fluid political landscape. It is a great testament to the Caribbean region's existing knowledge and expertise that so much rigorous and robust material has been produced at this speed.

Acknowledgements

The Reports in this compilation would not have been possible without the invaluable support and contributions of numerous individuals, stakeholders, and organizations united by a common goal: to provide technical, logistical, and strategic assistance to Caribbean negotiators at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), particularly in the context of the 2023 IMO Strategy on the Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the technical experts and consultants commissioned by Caribbean Shipping Lanes (CSL) to prepare the reports in this compilation, whose key insights were instrumental in supporting Caribbean negotiators in preparation for ISWG-GHG 18 and beyond. Their research and tireless work greatly enhanced the region's ability to represent its interests effectively.

Special thanks go to the entire CSL team, in particular, to Ms. Nafesha Richardson, CSL Research Fellow, for her dedicated research and editing support in compiling the reports; and to Ms. Najood Almula for her expert copy-editing, who ensured the overall quality and coherence of the compilation.

We also express our sincere appreciation to the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services (SRC) of the University of the West Indies, for its ongoing support in hosting CSL; to the team at University College London (UCL) for their continued technical collaboration; and to the United Nations Foundation, with the dedicated support of Ms Kerlene Wills, whose partnership and resources made the commissioning of these reports possible.

Finally, the CSL team extends deep thanks to our Caribbean negotiators at the IMO. Their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts—at the IMO and across other global forums—have been vital in advocating for the region's interests in maritime decarbonization and sustainability. Their leadership continues to inspire progress, both within the Caribbean and on the international stage.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Reports: A Multidisciplinary Examination of Caribbean Interests in Maritime Decarbonisation (March, 2025)

This Introduction presents a series of reports commissioned by the Caribbean Shipping Lanes (CSL) Project, aimed at providing critical insights and analyses on the implications of the 2023 IMO Strategy on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships for the Caribbean region.

That Strategy—which was adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in July 2023—commits member states to achieving net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping close to 2050, with indicative checkpoints of a 20–30% reduction by 2030 and 70–80% by 2040, compared to 2008 levels. Central to achieving these targets is the adoption of a “basket of midterm measures,” which includes both technical elements (such as mandatory use of low- and zero-carbon fuels and performance standards) and economic elements (such as market-based measures or a global GHG levy). These measures are being developed to ensure the maritime sector contributes its fair share to global climate goals, while ensuring a “just and equitable transition”, where no country, in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS) or Least-Developed Countries (LDCS), is left behind.

The reports in this compilation were commissioned between November 2024 and January 2025 to support Caribbean delegates participating in the ongoing IMO negotiations—particularly those related to the discussions at the Eighteenth Intersessional Working Group on GHG Emissions (ISWG-GHG 18), held in February 2025. These meetings form part of the technical groundwork for the anticipated approval of the basket of measures at the eighty-third meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 83), which is scheduled for April 2025, with their eventual adoption slated for October 2025.

Reflecting the breadth and complexity of the issues on the negotiating table, the reports adopt a multidisciplinary approach, recognizing that negotiators must grapple with legal, economic, technological, and social dimensions in tandem. The compilation includes:

- **Economic reports** assessing the likely impacts of proposed measures on the Caribbean’s trade, shipping costs, and food security;
- A **strategic options paper** exploring pathways for maritime decarbonisation with a focus on alternative fuels suited to the Caribbean context;
- A **legal analysis** of the proposals under consideration, including their compatibility with international law and implications for Small Island Developing States (SIDS); and

- A **stakeholder engagement report** based on in-country consultations conducted across multiple Caribbean states to ensure that local voices and priorities are reflected in regional responses.

The goal of these reports is to inform Caribbean negotiators, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and regional leaders, providing them with credible, timely, and region-specific data to guide their decision-making in the IMO and beyond, and to support sustainable growth in the maritime sector.

CSL developed detailed terms of reference for each consultant, with clear timelines for review and submission. As a result, the analysis in these reports covers the period leading up to ISWG-GHG 18, and does not account for developments occurring afterward.

While each consultant was given discretion in structuring their report, all reports follow a consistent format: beginning with an **Executive Summary**, providing **background on the relevant IMO negotiations**, and offering a **comprehensive discipline-specific analysis**. The reports include, where appropriate, **data-driven recommendations, proposed policy frameworks, and strategic roadmaps** to assist in national and regional deliberations.

Below, we offer concise summaries of each report included in this compilation.

REPORT SUMMARIES

1. Economic Reports

This compilation consists of five economic reports examining the potential impacts of the IMO's mid-term GHG mitigation measures on the Caribbean region. The reports provide data validation, economic impact assessments, and policy recommendations to support Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in navigating the transition to low-carbon shipping.

- 1. Economic and Trade Data Validation** - *Prepared by James Stewart (University College London)*
A validation of key economic and trade data relevant to Caribbean maritime activities, ensuring accurate assessments of the region's shipping sector.
- 2. Impact Analysis for the Caribbean Region** - *Prepared by James Stewart (University College London) and Dr. Kahuina Miller (Caribbean Maritime University)*
A comprehensive analysis of how the IMO's mid-term GHG reduction measures will affect Caribbean economies, highlighting risks and opportunities.
- 3. Reviewing Analysis of the Impact of IMO Mid-Term Measures on Caribbean Economies** - *Prepared by Marie Fricaudet (University College London), Dr. C. Andrea Clayton (Caribbean Maritime University), and Dr. Annika Frosch (University College London)*
A literature review of existing studies assessing the broader economic implications of shipping decarbonisation policies in the region.
- 4. Distributing Shipping Carbon Revenue in Caribbean Small Island Developing States** - *Prepared by Dr. C. Andrea Clayton (Caribbean Maritime University), Marie Fricaudet (University College London), and Dr. Carolyn Graham (Caribbean Maritime University)*
An evaluation of revenue redistribution from global carbon pricing mechanisms and its role in supporting maritime decarbonisation and economic resilience.
- 5. Assessing the Potential Impact of the IMO Mid-Term GHG Mitigation Measures on Food Security in Caribbean Nations** - *Prepared by David Forgenie (The University of the West Indies), Marie Fricaudet (University College London), Professor Andrew Muhammad (The University of Tennessee), and Professor Tristan Smith (University College London)*
An assessment of how rising shipping costs due to carbon levies may impact food prices and security in the Caribbean, with recommendations for mitigating adverse effects.

 [Full report here](#)

2. Maritime Decarbonization Scoping Paper -

Prepared by Kenesjay Green Limited

This report highlights the Caribbean's strategic role in global energy logistics and its potential as a hub for green fuel distribution. It emphasizes the need for infrastructure upgrades, renewable energy investment, and financial support to facilitate this transition.

 [Full report here](#)

3. Legal Report

Prepared by Professor David S Berry (Professor of International Law and Regional Integration Law University of the West Indies; Legal Consultant, Caribbean Shipping Lanes)

This legal brief supports Caribbean negotiators in IMO GHG negotiations, outlining key legal principles, evaluating proposals, and providing strategic guidance on fund governance, technical measures, and equity considerations in maritime decarbonisation.

 [Full report here](#)

4. Stakeholder Engagement Report

Prepared by Rosemarie Cadogan (Stakeholder Engagement Consultant, Caribbean Shipping Lanes)

This report outlines the Caribbean Shipping Lanes Project's stakeholder engagement on IMO GHG measures, highlighting regional concerns on trade, food security, and economic measures while emphasizing policy coherence and regional cooperation for a just transition. The four Caribbean countries engaged in the first set of focus group discussions were Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Jamaica and Antigua and Barbuda. A further report on engagement on the second set of focus group meetings held in March 2025 in Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis will be shared separately.

 [Full report here](#)