

# MARITIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING: RESPONDING TO THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE SEAFARER

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## **ABSTRACT**

BIMCO ICS Seafarer Workforce Report (ICS, 2021) indicate that about 74 000 global merchant vessels employ a total of 1.9 million seafarers who are involved in moving two thirds of the world total cargo carried by maritime transport (UNCTAD, 2021; Tang & Zhang, 2021). The dawn of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution brings about challenges concerning how the industry ensures that tomorrow seafarers have the necessary skills to ensure efficiency of the maritime industry. With the changing technologies, Emad, Enshaei and Ghosh (2022) caution against just focusing on the development of technology and forgetting about getting the seafarers ready for the future maritime landscape. Whereas seafaring is an old profession, over time, the role of the seafarer has changed, requiring shipping industry to devise strategies aimed at developing seafarer skills and competencies. Acomi and Acomi (2016) found that maritime and offshore oil and gas graduates lacked some of the expected competencies including soft skills and industry experience (Luu, 2019). There is a need to reskill and upskill seafarers so that they may be able to operate vessels efficiently and effectively in a safe manner. Whereas, BIMCO Workforce Report estimate seafarer shortages, there are still many seafarers who are still battling to find employment. How should the country manage its seafarer development programme to ensure South African seafarer relevance into the future? This presentation explores how the maritime industry should respond to the changing role of the seafarer. It establishes the challenges faced by South African seafarers regarding placement and explores the role of education and training in addressing the competitiveness of the seafarers.