



“Navigating Change”

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 – 2029

**International Christian Maritime
Association**

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to set out the future strategic vision, purpose, and actions for ICMA. In our last strategic plan (2022–2025), the goals focused on collaboration, research, publications, advocacy, and education. When that plan was written, the COVID-19 pandemic—first sweeping the globe in early 2020—was still a pressing reality, shaping the climate of deep uncertainty as we entered 2022. While the pandemic continues to offer important lessons, the years since have brought a new set of challenges: war in several regions of the world, threats in the Red Sea, tariff disputes, climate change affecting the Panama Canal, political polarization, and an intensified focus on decarbonization and technology. Each of these shifts has presented unique pressures, and we anticipate that further such challenges will emerge with regularity.

This new strategic plan seeks to build on ICMA’s strengths, maximizing connections among members and with partners, while making full use of the diverse tools at our disposal. In establishing this four-year vision, ICMA has identified several key areas requiring focused action:

- Maintaining and promoting meetings—especially in-person, but also online—that respond directly to current member needs.
- Delivering programmes of activity that support the vision, mission, and values of ICMA while addressing the evolving needs of our members.
- Securing ongoing approval and trust from members and stakeholders for ICMA’s mission and programmes.
- Engaging with the challenges of all members, whether global in scope or more regional and local.
- Providing space for connection and shared learning, enabling members to strengthen ties, exchange experiences, and speak with one voice.
- Enabling our members to connect with one another easily, fostering the continuity of care for seafarers, fishers, and their families across ports, ministries, and regions.
- Strengthening our presence in conversations at key UN agencies and industry bodies, ensuring information from these

2. OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

2.1 VISION

The International Christian Maritime Association will unify Christians engaged in service to seafarers, fishers, and their families. We will strengthen that service through visible fellowship and practical working together.

2.2 MISSION

The International Christian Maritime Association connects maritime ministries around the world and promotes their cooperation and development. ICMA researches new challenges and opportunities for maritime ministry, shares knowledge among its member ministries

through publications and education programs, and advocates for maritime workers with a unified voice in the industry.

2.3 VALUES

ICMA's Core Values:

- Ecumenism - We seek unity in voice and service among the Christian denominations that make up or support our members.
- Universality - We are called to show unconditional love and respect to all seafarers and fishers and their families, regardless of nationality, religion, culture, gender, or ethnic origin.
- Collaboration - We encourage partnership with all who work for the benefit of seafarers, fishers, and their families.
- Community - We seek to promote the feeling of fellowship and inclusivity among our members in our work together.
- Encouragement - We seek to motivate our members with thought leadership and action to higher levels of support for seafarers, fishers, and their families.
- Integrity - We maintain transparency in all matters of service and business within our organisation.
- Innovation - We seek to respond to challenges faced by our members by helping translate ideas into projects that bring practical answers.
- Accountability - We have an obligation to take responsibility for our promises and actions.
- Compassion - We have a deep compassion for the plight of seafarers, fishers and their families, and a strong desire to alleviate any suffering we find among them.

ICMA's current values continue to be shaped by the ideas of its foundation in 1969, but are augmented by the input of our membership in the years since. They reflect day-to-day discussion among leadership, chaplains, staff, and volunteers in locations around the world, but also the deep convictions of each societies' representatives and our trustees. These values will help the trustees judge whether our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan is successful, and how to refocus our plan to respond to the external and internal forces of change.

3. Navigating Change

Uncertainty has always been a feature of future planning, but the years since 2022 have brought profound new challenges. The lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, regional wars, threats in the Red Sea, disruptions from tariffs, climate change affecting major waterways such as the Panama Canal, political polarization, and the global drive toward decarbonization and new technologies—all have touched the work of seafarers' and fishers' welfare in significant ways. These pressures are often felt most acutely by ICMA's members, who live the realities of change in crisis response, ship visits, wellness seminars, seafarers'

centres, transport to shopping, or wherever their work touches seafarers, fishers, and their families.

ICMA's role is to stand alongside its members, learning from their experiences and identifying areas where collective action can strengthen our shared mission. At the heart of this work is our commitment to ecumenism. ICMA is a faith-based Christian network that values the unity of the Church in its service to the people of the sea. This ecumenical foundation is not only a spiritual conviction but also a practical strength: it enables members of diverse traditions to come together, foster trust, and build resilience in the face of uncertainty.

When connections between members are neglected, the effects are quickly visible: communication falters, development stalls, and training suffers. Yet when connections are nurtured – especially across confessional boundaries – they provide resilience, encouragement, and practical tools to meet challenges with confidence.

This strategic plan, *Navigating Change*, emphasizes the importance of deepening these ecumenical connections. Its aim is not only to add value to each member society, but ultimately to enhance service to seafarers, fishers, and their families. ICMA is uniquely positioned to deliver what individual members cannot achieve alone—providing shared resources, a common voice, and a network of solidarity that helps all navigate the shifting realities of our world.

Member feedback collected during and immediately following the 2025 ICMA World Conference in Barcelona reinforces that digitalisation, automation, decarbonisation, and resulting crew reductions are reshaping daily life at sea. Respondents also highlighted mental-health pressures, sharply reduced time in port, limited shore leave, and the destabilising effects of geopolitical conflict. These trends indicate that future generations of seafarers will require new technical competencies and deeper resilience to thrive in high-pressure environments, making coordinated support from ICMA more critical than ever.

4. STRATEGIC AREAS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

Five strategic areas that are central to the 2029 vision being realised are: Collaboration, Research, Internal Controls, Advocacy, and Professional Development.

5.1. Collaboration

Strategies:

Promote networking opportunities and meetings

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Regional in-person meetings, augmented by videoconference meetings in the interim	GS with regional coordinators and local hosts	Two times per year online and at least once in person bi-annually, depending on region and travel constraints
Maintain an up-to-date public member directory and an internal partner directory to strengthen information-sharing, continuity of care between ports, and improved services for seafarers.	GS and staff with regional coordinators and society leadership	Ongoing
Seminar for members with Annual General Meeting and Trustee meetings	GS, Trustees, and society leadership	Q3 2026 and annual
Promote and participate in seminars of members and partner organizations	GS	Ongoing
ICMA World Conference 2029 (60th Anniversary)	GS with planning Committee	Planning start Q4 2026 and more frequent as event approaches

Have robust communications that encourage working together

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Communications strategy that allows us to share the work of ICMA with wider maritime world	GS with staff	Ongoing
Promote work of members and partners on social media platforms and in monthly email newsletter	GS	Ongoing

Encourage partnership and enhanced cooperation

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Review management agreement with NAMMA; succession planning; and risk mitigation	ICMA Chair, NAMMA Chair, GS	Q4 2026 for proposal to NAMMA Q1 2027
Create forum and resources specific to ICMA members working with fishers	GS	Ongoing
Continue to promote ecumenism, ICMA Code of Conduct, and partnerships at member and partner events	GS	Ongoing
Annual member feedback, with special focus on organizations not represented on the trustees	GS and trustees	Q3, in advance of AGM

5.2 Research

Strategies:

Lead or collaborative research on wellbeing of and ministry to seafarers, fishers, and their families

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
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Research report to support well-being of and ministry to seafarers, fishers, and their families (topic defined each year)	GS, with input of IMO and ILO delegations	Annually
Edited collection of research essays on relevant topics that speak to contemporary challenges in seafarers' welfare	GS editor, with a group of authors	Completion 2026 and publication 2027
Consolidated report of annualized data by our members targeting specific metrics on seafarers' welfare support	GS with designated team from members	Pilot in 2026, implement in 2027

Cultivate research and dissemination partnerships

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Cooperate in research of industry and other maritime-related organizations that deals with welfare of seafarers, fishers, or their families or of maritime ministry	GS and various staff	Ongoing, as requested
Promote ICMA and its members as research partners and sources of information via website, social media, and presence at international events	GS and various staff	Ongoing

5.3 Internal Controls

Strategies:

Review of Handbooks and Policy documents

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Review employee handbook	GS, Trustees	Q1 2027 and annually
Review ICMA Code of Conduct	GS, Trustees, Membership	2029 (5-yr mark of current Code revision)
Review procedures for ICMA endorsements of programs	GS, Trustees, membership	2026
Crisis Response Framework – Develop a standing protocol for global crises (e.g., war, pandemics, canal blockages) so members can quickly coordinate	GS, Trustees, membership	2026 and annual review

Review of Financial and Administrative controls

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Review and clarify governance model for advocacy actions	GS, Trustees	2026
Review and implement financial control policy document	GS, treasurer, bookkeeper and trustees	Annually
Expand funding sources for ICMA meetings and activities to ensure sustainability	GS with staff and trustee feedback	Ongoing
Review and recommend annual increases in membership levels to ensure sustainability (index US COLA as primary cost driver)	GS, Trustees, Members	Q2 Trustee meeting for recommendation at AGM Q3

Review Trustee responsibilities under UK law	Trustees	2026 and annual update
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5.4 Advocacy

Strategies:

Public Awareness

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Leverage multimedia to amplify member advocacy and ICMA's seafarers' welfare priorities, particularly the work of our delegations with international bodies, industry, and labour.	GS, with IMO, ILO and other delegations	Ongoing

International Representation – UN (IMO-ILO) and other Agencies

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
IMO representation	IMO delegation, GS	As needed, add new members 2026
ILO representation	ILO delegation, GS	As needed, MLC2006 STC6 (2027?)
Other agencies	Ad hoc	As needed

Interactions with Governments, Industry, Labour

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Produce ICMA literature and resources that can be distributed to governments and social partners	GS with IMO and ILO delegations input	Ongoing

Attend industry or relevant events that allow us to connect with government, industry, and labour representatives as ICMA	IMO and ILO delegations, GS, ICMA chair or others	Ongoing
Advocate for fair, consistent shore-leave and port access globally, raising visibility of unequal treatment of crew at ports and promoting enforcement of MLC provisions.	GS, IMO and ILO delegations	Ongoing

Funding Organisations and NGOs

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Promote the voice of ICMA among members of ISWAN and the funding agencies	GS and Trustees	Annually
Propose to funders projects that can be of benefit to our members	GS and others	As requested

5.5 Professional Development

Strategies:

Introduction to seafarers' welfare and maritime ministry training

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Hold ISWMM Course once per year (in person)	GS with staff	Annually
Endorsement and encouragement of NAMMA in holding ISWMM North America in Houston	GS	Annually– typically February
Create advanced ISWMM courses (Ahoy! Course or advanced ship	GS	Annually

visiting/seafarers' welfare topical course)		
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Special topics training

Action Steps	Responsible	Timeframe
Develop short online training modules for volunteers and trustees (fundraising basics, maritime law awareness, mental health first aid).	GS with various partners	Three new courses per year
Provide training modules on emerging challenges to prepare welfare providers to understand the stresses and technical environments faced by modern seafarers and fishers.	GS with various partners	Two to three courses annually starting in 2027
Develop resources for hybrid ship-visiting and digital pastoral care, ensuring ministries can maintain human connection even when port time is limited.	GS with members	2026-2028