The IMO’s vision is to phase out greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as soon as possible within the end of this century. The aim is to reduce total emissions from shipping by 50% in 2050, and to reduce the average carbon intensity by 40% in 2030 and 70% in 2050, compared to 2008.

On 13 April 2018, the IMO adopted a strategy to reduce GHG emissions from shipping. The strategy is the first step of a roadmap adopted by the IMO to address GHG emissions in shipping.

Ambitious targets
The 50% emission reduction is ambitious, and will likely call for widespread uptake of zero-carbon fuels, in addition to other energy efficiency measures. These fuels are not available today, and there needs to be a concerted effort towards developing such fuels and making them available in the necessary quantity. At the same time, all other industries and nations are expected to contribute to reducing GHG emissions. This will both complement the efforts in the shipping industry, but at the same time there will be competition for the zero-carbon fuels.

Possible policy measures
The strategy contains a long list of possible measures that the IMO can implement, both regulatory measures and supporting measures. The IMO’s next step will be to prioritize and decide on which measures to follow up and to develop an action plan. Some of the measures under consideration are:

Short term (until 2023)
- Review and strengthen EEDI, including new phases
- Develop operational indicators
- Speed reduction/optimization
- National Action Plans (domestic measures, decided independently by countries)
- Life cycle GHG/carbon intensity guidelines for fuels

Medium term (2023 to 2030)
- New reduction mechanism, possibly including operational indicators
- Market-based measures
- Implementation programme for low-carbon fuels

Long term (2030 onwards)
- Development and provision of zero-carbon fuels
- Other innovative reduction mechanisms

Next steps
This is an initial strategy, and according to the roadmap there will a review in 5 years, based on the results from the Data Collection System and a 4th IMO GHG study to be undertaken in 2019. A programme for follow-up actions of the strategy will be discussed at the IMO in a working group meeting, likely in September, and at MEPC 73 in October, 2018.

Recommendations
This will not impact existing ships in the short term, but over time requirements are expected to apply for both new designs and existing ships. Ship owners and builders are recommended to monitor and explore energy efficiency and alternative low-carbon fuel options.

References
- Alternative fuel guidance paper
- IMO DCS web page
- Low Carbon Shipping Towards 2050

CONTACT
Please use our office locator to find the nearest DNV GL maritime office or email us at InternationalAffairs@dnvgl.com