



The KNOWME project focuses on the importance of the human factor within the shipping industry, which is covered by the European Commission's 'Maritime Transport Strategy 2009-2018'. Throughout this three-year project, from 2011 to 2014, researchers from six countries across Europe have addressed the following topics:

- Creation and dissemination of a modern image of shipping;
- Recruitment and retention of workforce in the maritime industry;
- Improving working and living conditions for seafarers;
- The current state and future of maritime education and training;
- Innovative maritime education and training policies;
- Collaboration between industry and Maritime Education and Training (MET) sectors.

This brochure provides an overview of the project highlights and conclusions. Please visit the KNOWME website for further information: [www.know-me.org](http://www.know-me.org)

## A modern 'image of shipping' in Europe

The continuously evolving environment of the shipping industry has created numerous dilemmas for companies in how they can operate efficiently, and in a socially responsible and acceptable manner. Thus, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** has emerged as a voluntary concept, which can simultaneously enhance the performance of the company, whilst fulfilling societal values. The KNOWME project mapped out the best practices of the shipping industry in CSR and analysed the relevant perceptions and views of the maritime stakeholders who are the receivers of the impacts generated by CSR activities. The main conclusion was that the CSR concept in the shipping industry could be better served when both human resource and environmental factors are combined.

A key factor for the competitiveness of the European Maritime Industry (EMI) is the future supply of a young talented workforce. The KNOWME project looked into important aspects of how to design and operate a marketing communication process as a **strategy for improving the image of the shipping** industry as a labour market, and as a career opportunity for young people. As a starting point, a survey was carried out amongst 2000 pupils in Sweden, Norway and Greece. Based on the survey, the concept of image was defined conceptually and empirically using scientific methods as a fundamental platform for the development of communication strategies. Image was identified as a multidimensional concept and its dimensions were measured in terms of strength and importance for pupils' choice of career path. The study

also analysed the importance of different variables for pupils' stated intentions to work as seafarers, such as influences from parents, friends, place of living and choice of educational programme.

The recruitment and retention of seafarers in the shipping industry is a major issue that nowadays most shipping and ship management companies are facing. Working and living conditions are crucial for both recruitment and retention. Moreover, access to communication is considered an important factor that affects these conditions. To understand the communication options available on board ships, particularly when it comes to the use of the internet, and to get to the heart of shipping industry retention, a survey of shipboard personnel has been conducted. More than 450 seafarers responded to a specifically designed questionnaire that aimed at gathering information on various work-related issues and on job satisfaction, with a particular focus on **the role of communication services and their availability on board, the type of access to communication facilities and the cost of access for the seafarers**. The results have shown that respondents perceive the separation from family and the inadequate communication with family and friends while at sea as the most important issues hindering retention in the seafaring profession.

## Strengthening the human factors in shipping

The KNOWME project analysed the future **demand of maritime professionals** in the maritime and port industry. The analysis indicated that there is still a need for traditional seafaring skills, but there is also a requirement for soft and non-technical skills, cross-cultural management and communication skills. The data also points to a need for new competences both at STCW level and above, which differ from country to country. These competences have arisen due to changes, such as an increase in administrative tasks originating from the introduction of new regulations and policies, as well as changes in company ownership. There are also demands which arise due to the advancement in information technology and other forms of technology. However, it should be noted that there are national differences in the preferred competences.

The project carried out an analysis of the training needs in managing the cultural diversity of people employed within the shipping industry, both on board and ashore. The analysis concluded that the development of **cross-cultural competency** has not been on the agenda of maritime education and training, despite the fact that the shipping sector is highly globalised and the maritime labour market is widely multicultural. Working conditions on board determine the cross-cultural competence as an essential part of a seafarer's skill set. The current and future needs of the maritime industry, shipping companies and organisations related to communicating and cooperating effectively in a multicultural and globalised working environment, raise interest and substantiate the necessity of developing cross-cultural competency among current and future maritime professionals.

The project developed a **cultural roadmap** to assist shipping crews in gaining a better cultural understanding of their fellow crew members. These guidelines provided both basic theoretical knowledge about cultural differences and the role of communication in cross-cultural awareness, as well as exercises that focused on a direct practical application of the theory.

## Integration of maritime education and training

Research within KNOWME has been carried out to evaluate the current status of integration between maritime education and training institutions in eleven Member States that are also the largest labour suppliers in Europe. It has been found that there is collaboration across borders within Europe when it comes to research and development projects and/or different types of exchange and mobility of staff and students. However, despite a few exceptions, the exchange of knowledge between MET institutions is low, and it is likely that a more formalised network of collaboration would benefit MET institutions, students and maritime professionals. The study has also shown that the predominant focus of MET is on operational jobs at sea, and very few possibilities exist for a seafarer who wishes to update his skills for a job ashore.

Based on a Training Needs Assessment, the project has developed the following three **e-courses**: **Cross-Cultural Training, Maritime Logistics & Supply Chain Management and Environmental Management**. The target groups for these courses are the potential and current workforce, both on board as well as ashore, and employees of the wider maritime industry. The courses enable people to develop and manage their careers through a lifecycle-oriented approach and are offered free of charge.

[go-maritime.net/e-courses](http://go-maritime.net/e-courses)

## Policies and practices from an international perspective

After the introduction of the Integrated European Maritime Policy of the European Commission in 2007, many Member States started developing or altering their own national policy in order to remain competitive on an international level. The KNOWME project analysed the state of policies and strategies in European countries with regard to training, education and knowledge development in particular. A conclusion is that most European countries have a well-balanced **maritime policy** and are also active in organising initiatives. Results from a survey conducted within KNOWME showed that overall educational institutions were rather satisfied with the initiatives, policies and strategies created by the EU and national governments.

## Portal for career management and development

The ‘Go-Maritime’ e-portal has been developed as part of the KNOWME project and is intended for pupils, students, job beginners and young professionals who are interested in a career in the European Maritime Industry (EMI). The portal aims to promote a **positive image of shipping**. It raises awareness for the broad range of job opportunities in the sector, and seeks to support the beginning of a career path and to show the concept of a **career lifecycle** in the EMI. ‘Go-Maritime’ provides profiles of the different opportunities to work onboard and ashore in ports, as well as in shipping and logistics companies. The profiles present a realistic idea of a working routine, in terms of ‘real life’ situations of the professional life at sea, such as a typical day in the life of a Ship Deck Officer. In the interactive section of the portal, the user can track ships, practise a seafarer’s vocabulary and keep up with the shipping industry via videos and other media. An interactive map provides direct access to stakeholders from the EMI with local contacts from education and training institutions, shipping companies, ship owners, public authorities, crewing agencies, sea ports and more.



[go-maritime.net](http://go-maritime.net)

## Collaboration between industry and education sectors

A central aim of the KNOWME project was to foster the collaboration between industry and the education sector. The project has organised stakeholder group meetings, while project partners have presented at conferences and exhibitions and have discussed relevant topics with industry representatives.

The project has also developed **information material for pupils** to inform them about the career prospects that the maritime industry offers and has made it available to teachers and career advisors in partner countries for future use in schools.

## Project Partners

- Transport Research Institute (TRI) at Edinburgh Napier University, United Kingdom
- Bremen University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- Jacobs University, Germany
- Luebeck University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- Molde University College, Norway
- Swedish Environmental Institute, Sweden
- Gothenburg University, Sweden
- Chalmers University, Sweden
- University of the Aegean, Greece
- Institute of Transport and Maritime Management Antwerp (ITMMA) at University of Antwerp, Belgium
- DSN - Connecting Knowledge, Germany

## Contact

Alfred Baird, Project leader

Damian Stantchev, Project coordinator

Transport Research Institute,  
Edinburgh Napier University, UK  
Email: [D.Stantchev@napier.ac.uk](mailto:D.Stantchev@napier.ac.uk)

Newsletter: [know-me.org/newsletter](http://know-me.org/newsletter)

Imprint: Persons responsible for content are: Frank Jürgensen, DSN and Damian Stantchev, TRI

Images: © Sabine Vielmo; Port of Gothenburg; Shestakoff - Fotolia.com; Masson - Fotolia.com

## Facts

- Funded by the European Union Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013
- 11 partner organisations, 6 countries
- Duration: 2011 - 2014 (36 months)
- Budget: 1.5m Euro
- Lead Partner: Transport Research Institute

