

NMCI Seafarers' Conference 2026

Charting a Digital Ocean Economy - Enabled by Skills, Data and Technology

Conference Programme

19 March 2026

National Maritime College
of Ireland

09:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Be part of the conversation. Use
#SeafarersConf26 to share your
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→ 08:15 AM - 08:55 AM	Registration
→ 09:00 AM - 09:30 AM	Welcome and Opening Addresses
→ 09:30 AM - 09:50 AM	Keynote Address
→ 09:50 AM - 10:10 AM	1st Session- Ireland's Climate, Energy and the Environment – A Policy Discussion
→ 10:10 AM - 11:15 AM	2nd Session-The impact of Technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the Future of Seafaring
→ 11:45 AM - 12:55 PM	3rd Session-Enabling Maritime Industry through Data - The Ocean Currency
→ 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	4th Session-Skills Needs for a Digital Ocean Economy
→ 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	5th Session -What Success Will Look Like?
→ 4:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Closing Address, Farewell & Thank You

PROGRAMME

DATE

19th March 2026

LOCATION

National Maritime
College of Ireland (NMCI),
Ringaskiddy, Cork, P43XV65

TIME

9:00 to 17:00

8.15 - 8.55

REGISTRATION

9.00 - 9.10



MC: MR. DAMIEN TIERNAN - JOURNALIST

Context Update from Seafarers' Conference 2025:



NMCI ALUMNI: STEPHANIE HYDE MCINTYRE



NMCI ALUMNI: FIONN CURTIS

9.10 - 9.20



Welcome Address

PROFESSOR MAGGIE CUSACK - *President Munster Technological University*

9.20 - 9.30



Opening Address

MR. TIMMY DOOLEY T.D.

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for Fisheries and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with special responsibility for the Marine (Video Address)

9.30 - 9.50



Conference Joint Keynote Address:

VICE ADM. MARK MELLETT (RTD.) - *The Geostrategic Context*



CAPT. ANN PLETSCHKE (NAUTICAL INSTITUTE) - *The Maritime Context*

9.50 - 10.10 1ST SESSION

IRELAND'S CLIMATE, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT A POLICY DISCUSSION- IN CONVERSATION WITH DAMIEN TIERNAN.

Panel Speakers:



OONAGH BUCKLEY

Secretary General Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment



DR. SUSAN STEELE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

European Fisheries Control Agency

10.10 - 11.15 2ND SESSION

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) ON THE FUTURE OF SEAFARING

Chair: VICE ADMIRAL MARK MELLETT (RTD.)

Panel Speakers:

CAPT. ANN PLETSCHKE - *Nautical Institute - STEER Project*

DAVID KIELY - *EU Maritime Affairs Attaché*

WILLIAM PRIESTLEY - *Director of Maritime Transport, Department of Transport*

DAVID NORONHA

Head of Future Networks & Strategic Offshore Planning Innovation & Planning- EirGrid

DR. HAZEL MURRAY - *Chair of Cyber Skills - Munster Technological University*

10.10 - 10.15



Panel Introduction

VICE ADMIRAL MARK MELLETT (RTD.)

10.15 - 10.25



CAPT. ANN PLETSCHKE

Nautical Institute -STEER Project - The Introduction of New Systems and Working Practices to Seafarers at Sea and Ashore

10.25 - 10.35



DAVID KIELY

Ireland's First Maritime Security Strategy

10.35 - 10.45



WILLIAM PRIESTLEY

Understanding Ireland's forthcoming Ports Policy

10.45 - 10.55



DAVID NORONHA

The Future of Ireland's Offshore (and Onshore) Grid

10.55 - 11.05



DR. HAZEL MURRAY

The Importance of Cyber Security to Maritime Security

11.05-11.15

Q&A

11.15 - 11.45 TEA/COFFEE - NETWORKING

11.45 - 12.55 3RD SESSION

ENABLING MARITIME INDUSTRY THROUGH DATA - THE OCEAN CURRENCY

Chair: COMMANDER ROBERTA O'BRIEN

Officer Commanding and Commandant Naval College and Associate Head of NMCI.

Panel Speakers:

CAITRÍONA NIC AONGHUSA - Section Manager at the Marine Institute

MOIRA WALSH - Project Director, Tonn Nua Offshore Wind Farm, ESB.

BRENDAN BYRNE - CEO Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association

DR. DÓNAL GRIFFIN - Fair Seas Ireland Campaign Coordinator

DR. ROBERT MCCABE - Maritime Security Researcher - NMCI

11.45 - 11.50



Panel Introduction

COMMANDER ROBERTA O'BRIEN

11.50 - 12.00



CAITRÍONA NIC AONGHUSA

The Importance of Data to Maritime Industrial Development

12.00 - 12.10



MOIRA WALSH

Developing Tonn Nua and the Importance of Data

12.10 - 12.20



BRENDAN BYRNE

The Fishing Industry Perspective and the Importance of Data

12.20 - 12.30



DR. DÓNAL GRIFFIN

The Importance Data to Marine Protection

12.30 - 12.40



DR. ROBERT MCCABE

The Importance of Data to Maritime Security

12.40 - 12.55

Panel Discussion and Q&A

12.55 - 13.00



DR. BRIAN DEVITT

Head of Department of Maritime Studies at NMCI- Introduction to the NMCI's Newest Technology - The Engine and Marine Bridge Simulator Suite & Freefall Lifeboat Simulator- "Sea for Yourself and Join a Lunchtime Tour".

13.00 - 14.30

LUNCH

with thanks to the IMDO, and New Simulator Tours

14.30 - 15.30

4TH SESSION

SKILLS NEEDS FOR A DIGITAL OCEAN ECONOMY

Chair: DR. SEÁN MCSWEENEY - *Dean Faculty of Engineering MTU*

Panel Speakers:

SARAH MILEY - *Construction and Green Skills Policy Unit, DFHERIS*

LIAM LACEY - *Director of Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO)*

THOMAS CAMPBELL - *General Manager Clyde Marine Training - Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) UK*

DR. JAIME VEIGA - *Senior Project Officer, European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)*

RACHAEL MCFARLANE - *Skillnet Offshore Wind Academy Manager*

14.30 - 14.35



Panel Introduction

DR. SEÁN MCSWEENEY

14.35 - 14.40



SARAH MILEY

Preparing for Future Skills Needs - Update on Ireland's Offshore Wind Skills Hub

14.40 - 14.50



LIAM LACEY

Future Skills Needs for the Maritime Economy

14.50 - 15.00



THOMAS CAMPBELL

The Future of Skills Training for Maritime Careers

15.00 - 15.10



JAIME VEIGA

EMSA the Strategic European Safety Context for Future Maritime skills

15.10 - 15.15



RACHAEL MCFARLANE

The Importance of Micro-Credentials to Skills Needs for our Ocean Economy

15.15 - 15.30

Panel Discussion and Q&A

15.30 - 16.30 5TH SESSION

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE?



Chair: PETER COYLE - *Chairman of the Marine Renewables Industry Association (MRIA)*

Panel Speakers:

CAPT. ROBERT MCCABE - *Chair Seafood/ORE WG*

BRIAN HOGAN - *Chief Surveyor, Marine Survey Office, Department of Transport*

STEPHANIE HYDE MCINTYRE - *Chief Officer at Irish Ferries*

FIONN CURTIS - *3rd Engineering Officer with Holland America Line*

15.30 - 15.40



CAPT. ROBERT MCCABE

Seafood/ORE WG Update

15.40 - 15.50



BRIAN HOGAN

Chief Surveyor's Update

15.50 - 15.55



STEPHANIE HYDE MCINTYRE

Reflections on Today's Discussions

15.55 - 16.00



FIONN CURTIS

Reflections on Today's Discussions

16.00 - 16.30

Panel Discussion and Q&A

16.30 - 16.45 CLOSING ADDRESS



MARIAN HARKIN T.D.

Minister of State with responsibility for Further Education, Apprenticeship, Construction, and Climate Skills (Video Address)

**16.45 - 17.00 WRAP-UP, FAREWELL
& THANK YOU**



DR. SEÁN MCSWEENEY

Dean Faculty of Engineering MTU

WITH THANKS TO OUR CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS



in association with Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment

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