

The Nautical Institute

Strategic Plan 2026-2030



The Nautical Institute

For more than 50 years, The Nautical Institute has promoted the highest standards of professionalism, best practice, competence and safety in the maritime industry. This paper sets out our strategy to further enhance our impact and continue to serve our members and wider community.

Charitable Objects and Powers

The Nautical Institute exists to advance public education in the study of nautical science and nautical studies generally.

Our constitution sets out our charitable objects and powers, which provide the focus for our aspirations for the future

We work with regulators, universities and training providers to help shape education, qualifications and professional standards in the industry. Our consultative status at the International Maritime Organization allows us to represent our members at the highest levels of decision-making by contributing independent expert advice on global regulation. We also work with other professional bodies, charities and authorities to share knowledge, lead research projects and disseminate best practice for operational safety and sustainability.



Our vision

To provide inspiration, knowledge and leadership to maritime professionals around the world.



Our mission

- To inspire maritime professionals
- To enable better decision-making by working together
- To share ideas and best practice
- To provide a safer, environmentally sound and sustainable maritime industry

Achievements

Our strategic plan for 2021-2026 was successfully delivered, strengthening the Institute’s reach, influence and resilience, establishing firm foundations for the 2026-2030 strategic plan.

Key achievements



109%
increase in global membership, including free student membership

60+
branches better supporting our growing global community


85
accredited Dynamic Positioning Training Centres




Launch of membership app providing digital access to *Seaways* and supporting learning and CPD



Expansion of our digital services



Expansion of projects and research activities through industry collaboration, securing more than £1.3 million in sponsorship



Increased range of technical publications, resulting in an annual publications turnover of over £1 million



Enhanced delivery of expert advice at the International Maritime Organization through our Volunteer Expert Delegate Scheme



Continued high performance in processing Dynamic Positioning Operator and DP Vessel Maintainer schemes. Certificates and renewals within 10 working days



Development and delivery of an online CPD system for Dynamic Positioning Operators

Strong engagement with younger mariners through expanded student membership and the development of the Younger Members Council (YMC)

Continued high performance in processing Dynamic Positioning Operator and DP Vessel Maintainer schemes. Certificates and renewals within 10 working days



Global webinars, with up to 1,000 people registering for each event

Our core strengths

Underpinned by 50 years of growth and experience, The Nautical Institute has built a suite of key attributes and niche capabilities within the global maritime community.

As an educational charity, we have developed an inclusive series of courses delivered online and in person by highly skilled master mariners and field experts.

Our international branch network spans over 50 countries and delivers networking events, workshops and conferences, supporting our members and the local maritime community, sharing experiences and best practice.

85 accredited industry leading DP training and certification centres around the world deliver an extensive list of industry approved schemes and certificates

Our specialised technical publications cover more than 60 topics and are authored and peer reviewed by our cohort of subject matter experts.

85

accredited industry leading DP training and certification centres

50+

countries covered by a Nautical Institute branch

Through our consultative status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), we ensure that our members and all seafarers are fairly represented. Our permanent delegation, supported by volunteer expert advisers and delegates from within our membership, ensures that our advice to the IMO is always of the highest quality.

The incredible breadth and depth of experience within our membership and our outstanding research capability have enabled us to build a particularly strong reputation in addressing real world operational challenges.

Our charitable model allows income from qualifications, training, publications and membership to be reinvested into free membership for students, safety initiatives, publications, webinars, research, our IMO engagement and greater professional outreach globally.





Our ambitions for 2030

This strategic plan builds on our strong foundations and ambition to continue the growth and global reach of The Nautical Institute, enhancing professional standards and supporting the next generation of maritime leaders.

Growth in our membership, supported by branch expansion, will increase the number of maritime professionals who benefit from the activities of the Institute. Students and early-career seafarers in particular will gain access to a range of educational and networking opportunities.

Expanding our range of technical publications and further developing our e-books and a digital library will strengthen the continuous professional development resources we provide for maritime professionals.

Our accreditation and certification schemes will continue to support specialisation and improve professional standards through training and education.

Our volunteer expert delegate scheme will enhance The Nautical Institute's influence on global maritime regulation and best practice for seafarers and maritime professionals.

Our focused research projects will lead informed debates on technology, recruitment, retention and operational safety.

Through our growth in membership and resources and our cooperation with sponsors and donors who share our vision for a safer, environmentally sound and sustainable maritime industry, we aim to enhance access to professional development and be ambitious in our activities.

“ This strategic plan builds on our strong foundations and ambition to continue the growth and global reach of The Nautical Institute, enhancing professional standards and supporting the next generation of maritime leaders ”

Risks and opportunities



Our reputation as the world’s leading professional organisation for mariners is at the core of our ability to recruit members, provide trusted training and advice to the global maritime community and deliver this strategy. It is essential that we protect this reputation through strong governance, including carefully managed appointment of trustees, quality assurance and brand alignment.

We have identified a risk from proposals at the IMO to move Dynamic Positioning training from STCW Part B (where it is ‘recommended’, industry-led, industry-delivered, and updated by industry representatives on an annual basis) to STCW Part A, where it will be mandated by the IMO through prescriptive rules in the STCW Code and an associated IMO Model Course. We will continue to work with regulators and industry partners to safeguard safety standards and preserve industry-led best practice.

As a member-led organisation with diverse technical expertise and the agility to respond rapidly to a fast-changing industry, we are in a privileged position, able to support safe adoption of innovative ideas and attract maritime professionals looking for expert guidance. Our digital offering can engage new members, expand our knowledge-sharing solutions and support recruitment and retention in the maritime industry.

Member survey

To help inform our decision making, our president’s survey asked respondents to identify the membership benefits they value most. The most frequent responses were:

- *Seaways* magazine
- Status as a maritime professional
- Networking with other maritime professionals and industry experts
- Representation at the IMO
- Access to webinars

The survey also confirmed the value of the strong international recognition of The Nautical Institute, our members’ appreciation of the networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities offered through the branches, and the importance of access to a global community of like-minded professionals.

Our members were asked to identify areas the future mariner should be competent in. They highlighted artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, autonomous/unmanned vessels, green technologies and alternative fuels, the human element and leadership, training and certification.

YOUNGER MEMBER AMBASSADOR
 “The Nautical Institute offers me a golden opportunity to exchange knowledge, positive maritime...”
 Prathit S.

MEMBER CHAMPION
 “Professional recognition, networking opportunities,...”
 [Name]

MEMBER CHAMPION
 “I firmly believe that membership with The Nautical Institute provides invaluable resources and networking opportunities essential for both personal and professional growth in the maritime industry.”
 Julian Mendis MNI, Sri Lanka Branch

YOUNGER MEMBER AMBASSADOR
 “I find great satisfaction in sharing insights and staying engaged with the maritime sector’s evolving standards and The Nautical Institute is the best place to do so.”
 Luciana Bezerra Aguiar e Silva, AMNIS



Diversity and inclusion pledge

The Nautical Institute, as the leading international organisation for maritime professionals, is committed to a diverse and inclusive maritime industry. We promote equity of opportunity, representation and participation across all activities, recognising that a resilient and safe industry depends on a diverse range of perspectives and experiences.

Our strategy

Our aim is to enhance The Nautical Institute’s position as the world’s leading professional development organisation for seafarers and maritime professionals at every stage of their career.

Focus areas

We will focus our efforts on four interdependent areas of activity:

- Membership and branches
- Research and relationships
- Qualifications
- Information and publications.

These four areas will be supported by centralised services to ensure consistency and optimise technological and administrative efficiency. Surplus revenue can then be used to fund enhanced member benefits and our wider charitable and outreach activities.





Membership and branches

- Our members are at the heart of the Institute's work.
- Our strategic priorities are to grow membership through greater retention, improved student-to-full member conversion and enhanced membership benefits. We will expand career support for our members through mentoring, networking and stronger engagement with employers.
- Our global network of branches is vital to fostering professional connections and will receive support to deliver more digital and regional events.



Research and relationships

- Collaborating with other organisations such as universities, training centres, governments and international bodies is fundamental to promoting the highest standards of professionalism in the maritime industry.
- Our engagement with the IMO through our consultative status remains a cornerstone of our influence and responsibility towards our members and the greater maritime community.
- Considering the rapid changes in the industry, our research will focus on the human element and the impact of technology on operational safety, new fuels and sustainability. Through targeted projects and special interest groups, we will provide thought leadership and practical guidance aligned with our members' needs.



Qualifications

- Technological improvements in the industry require maritime professionals to be expertly trained in different fields, including autonomous and hybrid shipping, carbon reduction, new fuels, ballast water control, cyber security and blockchain.
- At the same time, advances in digital technology and remote assessment offer new opportunities for training, certification and revalidating DPOs.
- Our aim is to develop new standards and enhance our training and qualifications offerings to meet the industry's changing needs in the offshore sector and beyond, improve knowledge and keep our seafarers and the environment safe.
- Our objective is to maintain industry-leading standards and consistency globally, while improving accessibility and efficiency by implementing digital certification solutions.



Information and publications

- Our practical, expert-led publications authored by mariners for mariners, will continue to set the standard for industry knowledge and be central to our values.
- Our role is simple: to help maritime professionals stay informed, connected and ahead of the many changes happening in the industry.
- Our strategic focus is to expand our publications offering and deliver a digital platform that will enable flexible learning and knowledge sharing by integrating publications, e-learning modules, multimedia assets and online assessments.



Centralised support services

- Efficient support services are critical to the success of our strategic plan.
- Our aim is for our physical infrastructure, digital systems and communications to be secure, adaptable and fit for the increasing needs of our growing global community.
- We will invest in our IT systems, customer relationship management platform, cyber security and communications to improve user experience, enhance member engagement and achieve operational resilience for informed decision making.
- We will aim to retain ISO 9001 accreditation, underpinning and demonstrating our commitment to quality operations.



The Nautical Institute Academy and The Nautical Foundation and Educational Trust

- The Nautical Institute Foundation was a new charitable initiative, formally launched in 2020, to enable the Institute to extend the scope and reach of its activities. We recently decided to refocus the Foundation's activities on the advancement of education. Further details and the Foundation's SMART objectives are set out in Annex 2.





Impact

The outcomes and the impact of this strategic plan will be monitored by The Nautical Institute's Executive Board and measured by objectives set out in Annex 1 to this plan. As always, we remain accountable to our members and adaptable to change.

Our voyage

From 2026 until 2030, we will implement this strategy with discipline and flexibility, adjusting our course when needed, while remaining true to our purpose: to share knowledge for better decision making.

Together with our members we will continue to support professionalism and promote safety and leadership across the maritime community.

This strategy was approved by the Executive Board of The Nautical Institute at its meeting on 24 March 2026.

Signed

Capt. John Lloyd FNI
Chief Executive Officer

Graham Cowling FNI
Chair, Executive Board

Annex 1

Our strategic deliverables for the next five years

This Annex sets the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Resourced, Timely) objectives through which our strategy will be delivered.

Membership and branches

Our previous ambition was to increase the number of individual members to 10,000 by 2026. The membership number exceeded 10,000 in the first half of 2024 and continues to grow. Approximately 40 percent are non-paying student members.

Strategic intent

To keep growing and supporting a globally connected professional community that shares knowledge, supports professionalism and provides networking and career opportunities.

Growth objectives

- Increase the number of full members to 11,000 by 2030
- Increase total members, including students, to 21,000 by 2030

Member engagement and benefits

- Launch a wellbeing app
- Introduce an online community portal to further facilitate member-to-member communications
- Provide mentorship opportunities
- Deliver a searchable database of members with specialist knowledge and skills
- Expand branch and regional engagement to improve global accessibility

Charitable outcomes

- Increasing the number of mariners who can benefit from professional body membership
- Greater support for maritime professionals in developing their careers, skills and knowledge
- Mentoring opportunities for those at the start of their maritime journey

Research and relationships

Strategic intent

To promote professionalism, safety and best practice across the maritime industry through evidence-based research, strong institutional relationships and expert representation at the IMO and other international organisations.

Growth objectives

- Secure £1 million in research grants over the period of this plan
- Strengthen The Nautical Institute's influence at the IMO through our expert delegates and our trusted relationships with other NGOs and flag states.
- Improve our network of subject matter experts in priority areas such as new technologies, navigational safety, alternative fuels and human-centred design
- Translate research outputs into practical guidance, training tools and CPD resources

Member engagement and benefits

- Establish and manage special interest groups by 2030
- Access to our IMO volunteer expert delegate scheme
- Access to our SeaGoing Correspondence Group

Charitable outcomes

- Maintain consistent and expert representation at all relevant IMO committees and sub-committees
- Deliver the STEER Project (2025-2028), producing an evidence-based toolbox to support better decision making and operational safety
- Deliver at least four free webinars focusing on topics most needed by the industry (e.g. alternative fuels, technology and AI, career opportunities, leadership and communications, transition from sea to shore)

- Publish The Navigator three times per year, freely available in print and digital formats
- Freely disseminate research outcomes and studies to the global maritime community through accessible digital platforms and other media

Qualifications

Strategic intent

To maintain industry leading qualification standards that focus on operational safety for maritime professionals working at sea and ashore while reflecting the technological advancements and the industry standards.

Growth objectives

- Deliver digital certification solution and logbooks by 2028
- Develop and launch DP operator qualification and certification for superyacht and cruise sectors by 2028
- Develop and launch the Oil Spill Response trainer recognition scheme by 2028
- Expand specialist qualifications for remote control centre operators by 2030

Member engagement and benefits

- Achieve 50 percent digital certification adoption by 2030
- Provide a digital audit platform to streamline the accreditation and reaccreditation process

Charitable outcomes

- Maintain industry-led, safety-focused DP operation standards
- Enhance consistency and improve accessible training options through digital delivery

Information and publications

Strategic intent

Through our practical guides and digital learning platform, support continuous professional development and provide knowledge for better decision making

Growth objectives

- Achieve £1.3 million in revenue from publications in 2030 while maintaining a minimum £1 million revenue each year
- Expand our internal publishing capacity to increase output and maintain the highest quality of publications
- Digitalise existing resources to deliver flexible access solutions

Member engagement and benefits

- Launch a digital knowledge platform to host e-books, e-learning modules, digital media and online assessments
- Deliver CPD-linked content
- 30% discount on all print and digital publications

Charitable outcomes

- Free monthly distribution of the MARS Reports (Mariner's Alerting and Reporting Scheme)
- Free content published online monthly from our members magazine, *Seaways*, and/or technical publications
- Free to attend webinars, interviews and events linked to our newly released publications

Centralised support services

Strategic intent

To optimise support for our four interdependent areas of activity through efficient infrastructure, enhanced digital capability and strong governance, while accommodating our growing global footprint.

Growth objectives

- Ensure adequate space in our London HQ to meet growth objectives
- Establish an overseas office by 2028
- Upgrade our website and CRM system
- Complete transition to cloud-based IT systems
- Achieve Cyber Essentials Certificate by 2027
- Develop a financial dashboard by 2028
- Deliver a strategic communications plan by end 2026
- Expand our participation at major events year on year.

Member engagement and benefits

- Optimised membership user experience on our digital platforms
- Increased online search functionalities (new website)
- Targeted communications based on preferences and localisation (Mailchimp)
- Discounts on selected Nautical Institute and industry events globally
- Representation of our members at events on a diverse and global stage

Charitable outcomes

- Your voice at the IMO: interviews with ambassadors and expert delegates discussing important matters directly from the IMO
- Maritime careers web area: free guidance for those looking to start a career in the industry and supportive information for the transition from sea to shore
- Knowledge sharing through our digital channels (website, YouTube, social media and STEER Project forum)
- Free distribution of our monthly newsletter (free sign-up on our website)

Annex 2

The Nautical Foundation and Educational Trust

This annex sets out the change to The Nautical Foundation and the connection between the Foundation, the Academy and The Nautical Institute.

For decades, The Nautical Institute has been a trusted authority in advancing competence, safety and leadership at sea. Today, the maritime sector faces new challenges: digitalisation, workforce diversity, mental health, and the urgent need to attract and retain talent. To address these priorities, The Nautical Institute is supporting The Nautical Foundation in its evolution into an operationally agile organisation. Together, we are expanding the scope and impact of educational and welfare initiatives.

Through the transfer of learning and professional development activities from The Nautical Institute Academy, The Nautical Foundation will become a dedicated centre for growth: delivering training, supporting cadet sponsorship programmes, funding research into leadership and retention, and hosting speaking engagements that promote wellbeing and inclusion.

With a renewed focus and an expanded scope of activity, The Nautical Foundation will bring greater breadth, innovation and reach to the areas that matter most to today's maritime community.

Guided by strong charitable governance and supported by The Nautical Institute's expertise, The Nautical Foundation will not only sustain vital work but also pioneer new initiatives that strengthen leadership, enhance diversity, and improve welfare across the maritime profession.

This collaborative approach ensures that both organisations remain at the forefront of shaping a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready maritime industry. Together, The Nautical Institute and The Nautical Foundation are investing in the future, developing people, shaping resilient organisations, and building a safer, more inclusive industry for generations to come.

Strategic intent

To extend the impact of The Nautical Institute by delivering leadership development, welfare and wellbeing initiatives that improve safety and strengthen resilience and professionalism across the global maritime community

Growth objectives

- Achieve sustainable growth through diversified income streams
- Strengthen the Foundation's reputation as a trusted centre of excellence on professional development, leadership and wellbeing
- Achieve annual revenue of £1 million by 2030
- Secure up to £200,000 annually through external funding
- Implement a fully integrated Learning Management System (LMS), including virtual classrooms and AI-led tutor support
- Deliver face-to-face workshops focused on leadership, safety, wellbeing and mental health
- Develop specialised programmes, including AI-based incident investigation and alternative fuels

Member engagement and benefits

- Deliver flexible learning opportunities
- Provide personalised learner support through digital tools
- Enable direct engagement through workshops, conferences and industry collaborations

Charitable outcomes

- Access to free learning assets through the LMS focusing on welfare and career support
- Access to learning tools for early-career seafarers and under-represented groups
- Improved safety and professionalism through effective leadership





The Nautical Institute is an international membership organisation for maritime professionals, working at sea and ashore, and a leading authority in the maritime industry. We promote the highest standards of professionalism, best practice, competence and safety in the maritime industry by providing professional development opportunities, training, publications and accreditation.



For more information visit our website:

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