

E-Newsletter

MARITIME MATTERS

INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE



World Maritime Day 2025, Celebrating Our Ocean, Our Shared Responsibility

On September 25th, the global community observed World Maritime Day, an important occasion established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to recognize shipping's vital role in driving the world economy. This year's theme, *"Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity"*, underscores the dual responsibility and potential of the maritime sector to safeguard marine ecosystems while fostering sustainable innovation.

In Belize, IMMARBE partnered with the Belize Port Authority (BPA) and the Belize Coast Guard to mark the occasion through two impactful initiatives.

The first initiative was the symbolic blue illumination of a key landmark in Belize, the Belize Baron Bliss Lighthouse to raise awareness and celebrate IMO's global effort. The second initiative was a community



clean-up where we partnered with the Belize Scout Association and other volunteers in a National coastal and Riverways cleanup on 27 September, highlighting the power of collective action to protect marine environments. These collaborative initiatives emerged from cross-organizational efforts

and brainstorming, reflecting the creative teamwork central to this year's theme.

IMMARBE also contributed to broader industry discussions by participating in the BPA's World Maritime Day Symposium and Expo, further emphasizing the importance of knowledge-sharing and innovation in maritime sustainability.

As we reflect on this year's celebrations, World Maritime Day remind us that the ocean connects us all and challenges us to act with purpose. By turning obligation into opportunity, we can ensure healthier seas and a thriving maritime future.

**TOGETHER, WE SAIL TOWARD
SOLUTION**



Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore Hosts 4th Annual Roundtable on Safe Shipping

On August 22, 2025, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) convened its 4th Annual Round Table Discussion with Foreign Flag States, bringing together 15 nations, including Belize, to strengthen collaboration between registries, port state control authorities and key maritime stakeholders. The session centered on a shared mission, advancing “Safe Shipping” through improved ship standards, enhanced flag-port communications and the exchange of best practices.

The round table provided a platform for participants to network, share insights and align efforts toward common maritime safety, protecting marine environments, and ensuring compliance with international regulations.

Discussions highlighted recent PSC inspection findings which identified recurring deficiencies

in critical areas such as fire safety, safety of Navigation, Life-Saving Appliances, Certificates and Documentation, and the International Safety Management (ISM) System. These insights reinforced the need for vigilance and proactive measures to maintain high safety standards onboard all vessels.

The event emphasized a strategic focus on reducing deficiencies, enhancing vessel performance, and strengthening Belize’s position within the global maritime framework. By fostering collaborative, proactive partnerships, stakeholders aim to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, ultimately supporting safer seas and a more resilient maritime industry.



Recognizing Excellence

Celebrating Top Performing Deputy Registrars

As IMMARBE continues to evolve to meet new challenges and opportunities, one constant remains. Over the past year, our Deputy Registrars have demonstrated exceptional dedication and collaboration during IMMARBE's transformation into a statutory body.

We proudly recognize our top performers, two of whom were mentioned in our inaugural first issue of Maritime Matters, one year ago.

Special acknowledgement to Mr. Erik DE Koning and Mr. Young Mo Gu for a year of excellence and growth. Your sustained impact and reliability continue to set a high standard which a testament to what dedication and professionalism can achieve.

We also extend our warm congratulations to Mr. Diego Corrado whose enthusiasm and outstanding contributions have quickly made a positive mark within the team.

As we celebrate their accomplishments, we extend our congratulations to all our affiliates who are making lasting impressions. Hard work continues to define who we are and shape where we're going next!

In addition, we commend those who have received continuous mentions throughout the year.

Our journey over the past year has seen significant organizational changes, from new processes and digital improvements to renewed focus on compliance and quality.



Recent Developments in Belize's Maritime Sector

Charting New Horizons: Belizeans Embark on WMU Journey

By Ellen Williams and Kenisha Allen

In recent years, education and specialized training in the maritime field have never been more accessible. Thanks to online learning platforms, expanded international partnerships, and a growing focus on skill development, professionals now have unprecedented access to the knowledge and tools needed to thrive in this ever-changing industry. It's an exciting time to dive deeper into a sector that not only powers international trade but also plays a pivotal role in safeguarding our oceans for future generations.

In Belize, we're proud to highlight three individuals who are seizing these opportunities: Ryan Silva (IMMARBE- Flag State), Clint McCulloch (BPA- Port State) and Lt. Melissa Jones (BCG- Coastal Security). Together they form a trio of Belizean students currently enrolled at the prestigious World Maritime University (WMU), a renowned hub for maritime education and research.

Their enrolment underscores Belize's commitment to investing in its maritime workforce. As they learn, grow and connect with peers from around the world, they're not only building careers they're helping shape a brighter future for Belize's maritime community.



Ryan Silva, Registration Officer I, with Professor Maximo Q. Mejia, Jr., WMU President

Belize Investment Summit

September 3 - 5, 2025

IMMARBE proudly served as a Bronze Sponsor for the Belize Investment Summit 2025, held at Sunset Caribe in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye. Organized under the team "*Bridging Markets, Building Resilience: The Nexus of CARICOM, Central America, and Mexico in the New Global Era*", the summit was a key initiative of the Government of Belize to foster regional collaboration.



L-R Claude Haylock, Director General and Registrar of Ships, representatives from BCCAR, FSC and Paul Gersok, Managing Director, IMMARBE

Important highlights included a major MoU signed to create Caribbean Sugar Refinery Limited, a joint venture between Sucro Limited and Santander Sugar Limited. The refinery aims to supply over 75% of CARICOM's refined sugar needs, bolstering regional food security.

The event underscores Belize's strategic role as a gateway connecting CARICOM, Central America, and southern Mexico, leveraging its English-speaking workforce and geographic advantages.

Discussion emphasized climate resilience, conservation and maritime ecosystems, and sustainable finance tools, aligning with global sustainability trends.

You can learn more about Belize Investment Summit [here!](#)



Honourable Prime Minister of Belize Mr. John Briceno.

Charting the Course: Updates to Belize's Maritime Regulations

IMMARBE is pleased to announce the publication of:

MMN 25 002 Guidelines for the Implementation of Annual Flag State Inspection

This comprehensive notice replaces MMN 19 006r3 Port State Control Analysis and Self-Inspection Program and outlines the updated procedure for conducting mandatory annual inspections for all Belize-flagged ships.

In addition, IMMARBE has also updated the following notice:

MMN 17 003r3 Survey and Certification for the International Survey and Certification for the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and

Sediments 2004 (BWM Convention). This guidance provides shipowners, ISM operators, Deputy Registrars and Recognized Organizations with the latest regulatory framework, certification procedures and compliance expectations in line with recent IMO resolutions and IMMARBE policies. This notice applies to all vessel types, with specific exceptions noted.

To access these publications an ensure you are always up to date with the latest maritime regulations visit www.immarbe.com and subscribe to our updates today.

Key Takeaways: Belize Registry visiting affiliates in Asia and Europe

In a proactive effort to deepen collaboration and align operations with global maritime standards, the newly appointed Managing Director, Paul Gersok has embarked on a series of high-level visits to affiliate organizations and regional maritime administrations since his onboarding in February 2025.

By meeting directly with affiliate offices, individuals and maritime administrations, he aims to strengthen trust, coordination, and shared goals while gaining first-hand insight into local challenges, capabilities, and compliance levels.

Establishing a visible presence among key stakeholders underscores our organization's commitment to leadership, accountability, and collaboration.

This initiative signals a new phase of leadership, one that prioritizes partnership and on-the-ground engagement. As Paul Gersok undertakes these visits, the organization expects a unified push toward maritime excellence.



Paul Gersok and Eduardo Simon visiting Türk Lloyd, Recognized Organization

Belize Participation in IMO/WMU/WISTA Women's Leadership and Empowerment Training

In a bold stride toward gender equality and leadership development, Belize is championing initiatives to empower women across government, business, civil society, and rural communities. These efforts, supported by leadership training programs, aim to dismantle gender barriers and cultivate a new generation of female leaders in the maritime sector.

A standout example of this progress is Ms. Felcia Vargas, Director of Registration Services at IMMARBE who is currently participating in the Inaugural IMO/WMU/WISYA Women's Leadership and Empowerment Training in Malmo Sweden. As one of the only 15 selected participants, Ms. Vargas is midway through the program's three-stage curriculum, which is tailored for women in maritime-related public and private sectors

The course, designed for professionals from maritime administrations, port authorities, coastguards and maritime education institutions, focuses on:

Strategic Leadership: Preparing participants to manage high-level roles

Sector Specific Knowledge: Covering critical topics relevant to maritime governance and operations.

Peer Networks: Fostering collaboration and support among women in the industry.

Such initiatives address visible gaps in female representation within leadership roles, creating sustainable pipelines for future leaders.



While progress is ongoing, Belize's proactive approach reflects a broader global trend. By investing in training and mentorship, the nation is not only empowering individuals like Ms. Vargas but also reinforcing its maritime sector's competitiveness. These efforts align with international frameworks, including those promoted by the IMO, which advocates for diversity and inclusion in shipping.

The maritime industry has historically been male dominated but programs like the IMO/WMU/WISTA training highlight the transformative power of targeted leadership development. For Belize, this commitment strengthens its position as a forward-thinking hub in the global maritime community

Stay tuned to future editions of Maritime Matters for updates on Ms. Vargas' journey and Belize's ongoing initiatives to shape a more inclusive future.



IMMARBE Advances Quality Management with Transfer of ISO9001:2015 Certification

In a strategic move aimed at enhancing its commitment to excellence and continuous improvement, IMMARBE has successfully transferred the certification of its ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System to DNV Business Assurance. This decision underscores IMMARBE's dedication to aligning with globally recognized standards and leveraging specialised expertise to elevate its service delivery and operational efficiency.

This transfer was motivated by IMMARBE's ongoing pursuit of excellence and its desire to partner with certification bodies that offers:

Enhanced Sector Expertise: DNV Business Assurance is renowned for its deep understanding of industry specific challenges and solutions, ensuring that IMMARBE's QMS practices are both robust and relevant.

Broader International Recognition: With a strong global presence and reputation, DNV Business Assurance provides IMMARBE with a certification that is widely respected and trusted across international markets.

This transition is more than just a change in certification; it reflects IMMARBE's broader vision to lead by example in the maritime sector. By choosing a certification body with a proven track record of excellence, IMMARBE reinforces its position as a forward-thinking and proactive organization dedicated to delivering the highest standards of quality service.

As IMMARBE continues to evolve and adapt to the ever-changing landscape of the maritime industry, this certification transfer marks a significant milestone in its journey toward operational excellence. It sets the stage for future initiatives aimed at enhancing quality, fostering innovation and driving sustainable growth.



MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATE

Certificate no.: C791823 Valid until/issue date: 23 August 2024 (by interim Certification body) Valid: 11 July 2023 – 23 August 2027

This is to certify that the management system of
IMMARBE
Keystone Building, Suite 502, 304 Newtown Barracks, Belize City, BELIZE

has been found to conform to the Quality Management System standard:
ISO 9001:2015

This certificate is valid for the following scope:
Ship Registration, Endorsement of Certificates of Seafarers and Statutory Certification

Place and date:
Katy, TX, 12 July 2025



For the issuing office:
DNV - Business Assurance
1400 Bavelle Drive, Katy, TX, 77449-5184, USA

Sheriff Mokkewy
Management Representative

Link of a list of DNV Business Assurance as well as the Client/Member Agreement may be found on the Certificate front side.
ACCREDITED UNIT: DNV Business Assurance USA Inc., 1400 Bavelle Drive, Katy, TX, 77449, USA | TEL: +1 281 205 1300, www.dnv.com

Meet our Staff

Uncover the Stories of our Dynamic Team

Ms. Candy Baizar
SEAFARER OFFICER



From my first day, IMMARBE's warm welcome made me feel like part of the team. Their support and training quickly familiarized me with regulations, STCW conventions, and procedures for verifying Certificates of Competency (COCs) and Medical Certificates from various countries and institutions. Over the past nine months, I've embraced new challenges and opportunities for growth in a fast-paced, engaging environment that keeps me motivated.

Recently, our Seafarer department merged with the Technical Department, and I am now mentored by Mr. Anique Sabal, the Technical and Seafarer Manager. His positive energy, innovative ideas, and forward-thinking leadership have boosted our productivity and enhanced client service.

Working in the Technical and Seafarer Department feels like being part of a dedicated, collaborative family committed to excellence. I am proud to contribute to this dynamic environment and, with the support of my colleagues and leaders, I look forward to a long and fulfilling career at IMMARBE.

Mrs. Ellen Williams
ACCOUNTS OFFICER



For nearly two years, I have had the honour of serving in IMMARBE's finance department, a role that, while often behind the scenes, is a cornerstone of maritime administration, our mission is to ensure financial accuracy, accountability and transparency. These are critical elements that uphold the integrity of the Registry's operations.

Over the years, I have come to deeply appreciate the significance of this work in achieving our boarder objectives. Every financial decision and calculated risk we take propels the organization forward.

This year's World Maritime Day theme "Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity", highlights our shared responsibility to protect and sustainably harness the power of our oceans. As we look to the future, I am excited about the fast-growing interconnectedness and rapidly changing technological advancements in the maritime sector.

I am hopeful that more young Belizeans will bring fresh energy and ideas to this vital industry.



Ms. Emelda Herrera
OPERATIONS OFFICER

In nearly two years working at IMMARBE, I've found my role as an Operations Officer both rewarding and enlightening. Coordinating maritime events and staff activities has given me a unique perspective on our office's operations. I've also gained insights into the Registration Department, managing processes that keep our fleet moving efficiently, and cross-trained in the Seafarer Department, which was vital to deepening my understanding of IMMARBE's diverse functions.

Recently, I've started cross-training in the Finance Department, where the focus on detail and precision has been challenging yet rewarding.

Each experience has contributed to my growth, enhancing my skills and adaptability. As I continue to evolve in my role, I am grateful for the opportunities to learn and take on new challenges. I am excited to see where my journey at IMMARBE will lead next and look forward to contributing further to the organization's success.



Ms. Janelli Grajalez
REGISTRATION OFFICER

The theme of this year's World Maritime Day, "Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity," deeply reflects my journey at IMMARBE. I started in June 2023, feeling uncertain about the technical processes and fast-paced environment. Initially, my role seemed small, but I soon recognized IMMARBE's vital role in global trade, maritime safety, and sustainable development, which gave me a strong sense of purpose.

My motivation has been greatly inspired by the people around me. Mentors like Ms. Lenora and Ms. Felicia have been instrumental in building my confidence, and their belief in me, along with my team's encouragement, has changed how I view challenges, I now see them as opportunities to grow.

In May 2025, I joined WiMAC Belize Chapter, an association focused on empowering women in the maritime sector. As a new member, I am eager to learn and connect with women who share my passion for advancing our roles in the industry.

This journey has shown me that our obligations to the ocean and the industry are also opportunities to drive positive change, and I am committed to contributing to IMMARBE's mission and supporting women's advancement in maritime.

Notable additions to our workforce

Positioning IMMARBE for Growth, Excellence and Enhanced Services



Mr. Oscar Fuentes
TECHNICAL ASSOCIATE OFFICER

Working at IMMARBE provides me with a valuable opportunity to expand my knowledge of the maritime sector and to deepen my understanding of the importance of statutory certification. Every vessel must hold the required certificates issued by recognized organizations to ensure compliance with international conventions such as SOLAS and MARPOL. These conventions are vital, not only for the safety of ships and crew, but also for the protection of our marine environment.

This year's World Maritime Day theme, *"Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity,"* resonates strongly with the work we do. It is our obligation to work closely with vessel owners, operators, and all stakeholders to ensure that vessels meet international standards. By upholding these obligations, we create opportunities to strengthen the shipping industry, promote sustainable practices, and safeguard the oceans that sustain us all.

At IMMARBE, each certificate issued, each inspection conducted, and each collaboration formed represents more than a regulatory requirement—it represents a shared responsibility to maintain safe seas and clean oceans. As I grow in this field, I am motivated by the knowledge that the work we do today contributes to a safer, greener, and more resilient maritime future.



Ms. Bibiana Paquil
Senior Accountant
Finance Department



Mrs. Janelle Thomas Shorter
Legal Officer
Legal Department

As we progress toward our strategic goals for 2025, IMMARBE is excited to announce the expansion of our Finance Department and the establishment of a dedicated Legal Department. These developments underscore our unwavering commitment to enhancing internal capabilities, elevating service quality, and addressing the evolving responsibilities of a modern Flag State.

This growth is not merely about increasing our team size; it is a strategic investment in innovation, collaboration, and long-term sustainability. By strengthening these critical areas, we aim to better serve our stakeholders and uphold the highest standards of maritime governance.

Our employees' valuable insights and expertise play a pivotal role in shaping IMMARBE's future. Stay tuned to upcoming issues of Maritime Matters to learn more about our new team members and their contributions.

Join us in welcoming them to the IMMARBE family as we embark on this exciting new chapter together!



World Maritime Day

Search word puzzle

By Haldane Stephenson

G Y Y M F P I E F Y N K B F P X J C S T W H A D I L E U O H
S L T T O K I D F H A H C K Z D E A T D M I J Q F E X T Y I
M U O I I E U A O Z V E B Q V V F M O N O Q J I T I P B N O
G F S B V R T R E A I U I S W E O B L I G A T I O N L N G M
F D B T A I U T A K G V D L T N E C N E I L I S E R O I W N
G U I I A L T C G Y A J R Y A X N G Q B S O S Q M V R E X A
X W V C L I I C E G T R Q E H N X K I D G U Q X A N A O L D
H O R D P R N Z E S I A C G X F K T E G D I G T S M T B O T
F J F F M Y U A A N O O I G B A U H G Z Q Y I E F K I D Q Y
C L I M A T E V B T N W U J H P N M A X S O C Q O P O Z E I
B W V B Q C S P Z I I O B N G D W V T N N K P X O W N E N P
X F U Q Q P S Y Q X L O C Q C J T E I C L Z T Y S N A N I P
D T V K T Z J I C G R I N P I H S D R A W E T S K O F X A X
S H J E O G H M D Q X K T H P Z T Q E J G G H X X X E A Z D
A O G J J D F X K W X K H Y Z Y N K H D V B J M U E K E U E

Climate

Globalization

Navigation

Resilience

Stewardship

Connectivity

Heritage

Obligation

Safety

Sustainability

Exploration

Innovation

Ocean

Security

Trade

