

## **Written evidence submitted by British Marine (MAR0020)**

### **1. Introduction**

British Marine is the trade association for the UK's leisure, superyacht, and small commercial marine industry. We have 1,500 member companies, most of which are small and medium sized businesses. These companies provide the boats, marine equipment, facilities and services that enables four million people to enjoy boating and water sports on the coastal and inland waterways of the UK every year.

We support the leisure marine industry through a range of services and operate the Southampton International Boat Show, which provides a world leading showcase for UK marine businesses.

This consultation response focuses on the elements of Maritime 2050 of most relevance to the leisure marine sector which includes competitiveness, environment, and skills.

### **2. Progress towards the ambitions and targets set out in Maritime 2050, including effectiveness, pace and priority of the strategy's implementation**

Collectively, the industry has made considerable progress towards the ambitions and goals identified by Maritime 2050. Looking specifically at the leisure marine industry and the short-term goals as documented in the strategy, this progress is more noticeable under the competitiveness, environment, and skills aspects of the strategy.

On competitiveness, considerable progress has been made with various government departments in 2021/22 focusing on the revised National Shipbuilding Strategy and the creation of the Maritime Capability Campaign Office which is designed to make UK exports more competitive and attractive.

From a strategy perspective, there have also been very clear gains in terms of closer engagement between industry and government. The establishment of the Maritime Exports and Investments Group which is made up of officials from the Department for International Trade, British Marine and other Maritime UK members has certainly been beneficial for industry, enabling more transparency around decision-making and greater support for leisure marine businesses.

The skills and people element of the strategy has also seen considerable progress. This is despite the pressures from the pandemic and a greater shift towards alternate working patterns. Some of the targets were to improve digital skills and expand diversity initiatives which have been achieved through the delivery of more online training courses and virtual learning throughout the pandemic.

Maritime UK, the umbrella body for the maritime industry has expanded and refocused its Women in Maritime Group to create a much wider and inclusive Diversity in Maritime Programme focusing on women as well as other unrepresented groups including LGBTQ+ and a group looking at ethnicity.

A Maritime Skills Commission has also been established to look at skills within the maritime sector and identified the gaps and challenges that remain. This commission has already made great progress reporting on labour market intelligence, maritime futures and lessons to be learnt from digital learning.

In addition, other steps have been taken to address skills shortages and attract more women include the People Like Me project funded by the Department for Transport and delivered by Maritime UK. This project was designed to attract more women into the industry by showcasing the variety of roles available in the maritime sector.

Maritime 2050 acknowledged the priority to drive investment in green infrastructure, consider the use of economic instruments to support the transition to net zero and was followed by the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

It is clear that the government is now looking at the issue of shore power within the maritime industry, with a consultation having just closed on the issue – including what the opportunities, challenges and economic instruments could look like for the sector.

It is worth noting that in this consultation the Department for Transport has sought feedback on the use of instruments such as a mandate on ports and vessels to ensure they have shore power capability or are shore power ready. British Marine has responded to the consultation setting out its concerns over any potential mandate. This is because there are currently issues with power supply and connectivity to coastal towns – meaning that any mandate on either ports or vessels would be limited in terms of its effectiveness. It is encouraging to see the government consult on the use of shore power and outline steps to take the ambitions in the Maritime 2050 strategy forward; however, we are clear that policies and legislation must recognise the current constraints surrounding existing power supply.

### **3. Whether and how the ambitions and objectives described in Maritime 2050 support the maritime sector**

Overall, we consider the ambitions and objectives in the strategy do support the maritime sector. Looking at the strategy as whole, the seven themes are the most relevant and important – representing the challenges and opportunities facing the sector. Whilst there are some targets and objectives that focus specifically on the leisure marine sector, the document as a whole is more geared towards shipping and vessels operating at sea, as opposed to vessels operating on inland waterways.

It is also worth noting that the strategy was published before the pandemic and it is possible that some of the priorities and objectives have shifted as a result, which has placed greater pressure on some areas with the strategy, notably trade and challenges within the supply chains.

The pandemic may also have changed attitudes towards international travel, with more people deciding to take a staycation. Demand for new and used boats has soared throughout the pandemic so it would be useful to review some of the maritime 2050 objectives post-pandemic, review where the gaps might be and if the trade objectives are still ambitious and likely to be achieved.

British Marine also undertakes internationally activity to support members to export overseas. We therefore welcomed the target in Maritime 2050 to increase the percentage of UK exports from 30% of GDP to 35%. The announcement of the MCCO will, in principle, help the maritime sector hugely by investing greater funds and ensuring that UK maritime exports remain competitive and will help to line up export opportunities for UK businesses.

The above developments are very welcome; however we do believe that the decision to remove the Tradeshow Access Programme and replace it with the UK Tradeshow Programme should be revisited. The new programme, in contrast to its predecessor, can only be used once and provides smaller grants to businesses or individuals either attending or exhibiting at a set of agreed overseas shows. Traditionally, these grants have enabled many of our members to attend overseas boat shows, make sales and forge connections in new markets. So, whilst we welcome the announcement of the MCCO, we would welcome a review of the decision to discontinue TAP and provide funding for only a limited number of shows under the new scheme.

#### **4. The effect of Maritime 2050 on Government policies and regulation, maritime sector decision making and economic and environmental outcomes.**

The introduction of the Maritime 2050 strategy has certainly supported decision making in the sector and provides useful plans and route maps for policymakers and industry to work towards.

Indeed, the strategy has served as a useful benchmark for British Marine – allowing us to identify and draw up our own National Agenda in 2020.

This sets out what our priorities and realistic ambition for British Marine's members is to 2025 and beyond. The priorities set in our own agenda are related to those in Maritime 2050, with activity falling under the headings of people and skills, environment, innovation, participation and representation. In this respect, Maritime 2050 has had a positive impact on maritime sector decision making.

As a trade association, forging connections with government officials is important. Having a strategy for the maritime sector has been accompanied by greater resourcing within government which has been positive for industry and something which we hope will continue.

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