

# WOMEN IN MARITIME SURVEY 2024

A report on the participation of  
women in the public and private  
maritime sector workforces



# Women in Maritime Survey 2024

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in the public and private maritime sector workforces

Coordinated by



ABBREVIATIONS

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## A cornerstone of our future

*"Achieving gender equality, as outlined in UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, is not just an aspiration, it is a collective responsibility for everyone in maritime."*

Our oceans support millions of jobs in shipping, maritime administrations and ocean industries. For the wider maritime sector to thrive, it must continuously attract and retain skilled professionals who will drive its future success.

This means investing in talent, ensuring that everyone - especially, women and girls - has every opportunity to build a fulfilling career in maritime. Diversity is not just a goal; it is a necessity for innovation, sustainability, and long-term prosperity.

This second IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey provides valuable insights into the sector's progress since the baseline dataset gathered in the 2021 Survey. Greater participation in the Survey from Member States and industry is a welcome indication of growing engagement with gender matters. The results show inconsistent improvements in female participation at various levels across the maritime sector. Within IMO Member States, women now represent 19% of the workforce employed in maritime.

However, there is some way to go. Women remain a small fraction of the seagoing workforce, highlighting the urgent need for continued commitment and action. We must redouble our efforts to foster a truly diverse and inclusive maritime industry—one where talent is recognized and nurtured, regardless of gender, to usher us into a new digital and decarbonised maritime era. Our responsibility is clear:

to implement policies that drive meaningful change, to create mentoring, training, and networking opportunities, and to facilitate an environment where women in maritime can thrive. This report offers concrete recommendations to accelerate progress and ensure that diversity becomes a cornerstone of our industry's future.

At IMO, we will continue to push forward, through our flagship Women in Maritime programme, now in its fourth decade, and by mainstreaming gender in all projects and capacity development activities. We recognise that true progress requires sustained action, strategic investment, and continuous monitoring. Therefore, we are actively strengthening partnerships with Member States, industry leaders, and international organisations to promote best practices and develop targeted policies. We are committed to tracking all financial investments made on gender-related matters within our technical cooperation efforts, ensuring accountability and measurable impact.

Achieving gender equality, as outlined in UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, is not just an aspiration, it is a collective responsibility for everyone in maritime. So my call to everyone is to get on board - let's all work to build on the progress to date and seize the opportunities to achieve a more inclusive, dynamic, and forward-looking maritime sector for generations to come.



## A commitment to change

*"The Women in Maritime Survey was designed to deliver real data, offer guidance in areas that require more attention and act as a collective call to action."*

At a time when diversity and inclusion policies are being called into question, the importance of initiatives such as the IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey, and the vital insights they offer, cannot be underestimated. I would therefore like to thank everyone who took part in the Survey. Your responses are greatly appreciated and essential; they underpin our continued efforts to understand and measure gender diversity in the maritime industry with accuracy to drive impactful change.

The first IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey laid strong foundations and it is encouraging to see that there have been genuine efforts to improve gender diversity in several sectors over the last three years. However, the results are uneven: some parts of the maritime industry have seen growing female representation, but others have experienced a decline.

Nevertheless, I take encouragement from the fact that newer areas of our industry - such as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and decarbonisation services, and maritime technology - have seen especially strong growth. These fields are directly linked to some of our biggest challenges, and growth here highlights the essential role of diversity and how women are contributing to the industry's future.

The Women in Maritime Survey was designed to deliver real data, offer guidance in areas that require more attention and act as a collective call to action.

With this in mind, the results show that attracting, retaining and promoting women - both on land and at sea - remains a major issue. Women account for only 1% of the active seafarers employed by surveyed companies directly hiring seafarers, and only 5% of seafaring students. We must address this gender disparity at sea.

The data indicates the continuing presence of barriers such as gender stereotyping, workplace safety concerns, a lack of family friendly policies and the ongoing gender pay gap. We all have a duty to make the industry more accessible and inclusive, not just for future generations but for today's workforce. It is my hope that the 2024 Women in Maritime Survey results guide the actions we must take to bring about cultural change, as we still have a long way to go in our mission to improve gender diversity and break the gender bias.

For over 50 years, WISTA has been supporting career progression for women and working with industry to help move the dial on diversity and inclusion at all levels. IMO's commitment to our cause across multiple initiatives has unquestionably supported the goals set out in WISTA International's Articles of Association. We remain committed to promoting gender equity and diversity as forces for positive change and look forward to working closely with industry stakeholders to create a more sustainable future for all.

# I

## Executive Summary

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The IMO WISTA Women in Maritime Survey 2024 provides a comprehensive analysis of gender representation and highlights changes that have taken place since the inaugural Survey in 2021. The report presents the analysis of data across IMO Member States and the wider maritime industry (from two distinct questionnaires), delivers insights across leadership, workforce participation, policies, and education in both the public and private sectors.

The latest findings demonstrate a growing awareness and commitment to greater gender diversity in the maritime workforce, as evidenced by the higher participation in the Survey.

A total of 88 IMO Member States and 608 organisations from the private sector responded to the latest questionnaire, up from the 45 Member States and 513 organisations that shared information with us in 2021.

### Global Trends In Women's Participation

The data paints a complex picture: although the number of women in maritime across the public and private sectors is going up in terms of employees reported, moving to 176,820 women in 2024. This figure accounts for just under 19% of the total workforce. This compares to 151,979 women in 2021, which accounted for 26%. Thus, although the total number of women recorded in this report has increased, the additional data - particularly from Member States which increased significantly in terms of respondents - displays a downward trend in ratio of women to men in the maritime workforce.

Organisations across the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific all reported the highest levels of women workers, accounting for more than 20% of the total workforce in both IMO Member States as well as in the private sector. The Pacific was the region with the highest ratio of women in the workforce in the public sector at just over 26% (totalling 1,375 women), while the Caribbean region led the way in the private sector at 63% - which in real terms was just 197 women. The majority of women in the private sector are located in Europe, with a total of 15,457 women reported in the surveyed private

sector workforce of 71,470 - amounting to just over 21% of the workforce.

In terms of total numbers, North American respondents reported the largest number of women workers overall, with 68,133 female employees recorded - the majority of whom can be found in the public sector (66,942 women). However, given the regional reported workforce of 372,366 individuals, women in North American workforces account for just over 18% of total workers.

Other regions of note include Latin America, where the figure (totalling 3,954 women) rests at above 18% across both the public and private sector, and also Asia, where women account for 16% of the workforce of private sector respondents (5,855 women) and 19% (17,321 women) reported to be working in surveyed Member State workforces.

Individual countries and organisations across all regions will no doubt display variance.

### Member State insights

Women account for just over 19% of the total workforce in IMO Member States, with 148,828 female employees reported in a total workforce of 772,470. There have been some notable increases since the Survey was first conducted. The percentage of women working in government-owned ports and terminals rose to 25% from 19%, while women now constitute 25% of staff in the Secretariats of Port State Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). The representation of women as IMO delegates improved to 28%, from 21% in 2021. Additionally, the number of female Heads of Maritime Administrations increased to 14 in

Executive Summary

2024 from six in 2021. This means 15% of all Member States responding to this Survey have women leading their maritime administrations.

The Survey found women's representation in core and support roles within maritime administrations varies across regions, with Argentina, Australia, and Sweden reporting an increase, while Chile, Costa Rica, and Norway reported declines. Specialist technical and operational roles (core) for women have both shown increases.

Policy implementation plays a crucial role in gender representation as well. Of the 88 Member States who responded, 73 Member States shared information on gender-responsive workplace policies/initiatives in place across their maritime administrations. Although 17 of the 73 respondents lacked formal frameworks, 35 Member States had five or more policies/initiatives in place. A total of 55 Member States had sexual harassment policies, and 28 of these have gender/diversity training in place. Thirty-nine have flexible working arrangements, with all but four of them offering beneficial workplace policies for childcare.

Encouragement of younger female participation in maritime careers remains an area for ongoing development. A demographic breakdown shows that most women in maritime administrations are aged 25-44, with no significant representation of women aged 18-24, except in Argentina.

Representation of women at IMO meetings is inconsistent, with 22 Member States reporting a strong female presence. Canada and Norway reported that more than 50% of delegates

attending IMO meetings were women. By contrast, 24 Member States had no female representation at IMO meetings.

Maritime education was a key area of focus in the Survey, with new datasets introduced to distinguish between graduates of national maritime academies (dedicated to seafarer training) and those of maritime universities (offering degrees in fields such as naval architecture, maritime law, marine engineering, oceanography, etc). Some Member States reported significant increases in women graduates.

The Survey also looked at women's networks and associations. Currently, 59 maritime administrations have dedicated women's networks, including 49 national chapters of IMO-established regional Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs).

Industry insights

By comparison to IMO Member States, there are fewer women found in maritime's private sector - and in fact, fewer than recorded in the inaugural Survey. Female employees accounted for a little over 16% of the total surveyed maritime workforce of 172,691 individuals, with just 27,992 recorded. This is notably lower than the 29% reported in 2021, where women accounted for 107,023 out of a total of 367,858 employees.

As participation in the online Survey was voluntary, there was only a partial overlap with the previous set of respondents. Thus, although the picture painted by the 2024 survey is an accurate snapshot of the sector as it stands today, the comparison with the previous set of data is not completely like for like.

According to the 2024 replies, the port operations & services sector accounts for the largest number of women in a sub category at 4,499 - and also had the highest number of responding organisations at 66. Other sectors with organisations contributing significant amounts of data include ship owners (60), ship and crew management (53) and maritime associations/organisations/NGOs (44).

An increase in female representation has been reported in sectors such as advertising, marketing, public relations, crewing agencies and ship agents. However, declines were observed in bunkering and legal services. New entrants such as environmental, social and governance (ESG) and decarbonisation services, financial institutions/banks and weather intelligence services, all reported a higher than average number of women workers.

The presence of women on executive/company boards varies significantly from country to country. Malaysia is notable with 71% representation from 13 women on company boards, while Greece had the highest number at 56 women, but accounted for only 35% of total board members. Sectors with the highest female respondents in C-suite positions include maritime associations/organisations/NGOs, ship and crew management, and port operations.

Despite some progress, women remain underrepresented in mid-management positions, declining to 20%, from 39% in 2021. Drops were also noted in specialist and technical operational roles and support roles. However, sectors including crewing agencies and crew training, offshore and maritime education and training institutions have all seen significant gains in female leadership.

The data highlights a level of consistency in the adoption and/or implementation of gender-inclusive policies amongst respondents. The number of companies/organisations that have specific quantitative measures for increasing diversity rose to 67 in 2024 from 59 in 2021. That said, some 157 organisations reported having no gender equality policy in recruitment and promotion, underscoring the need for further improvements.

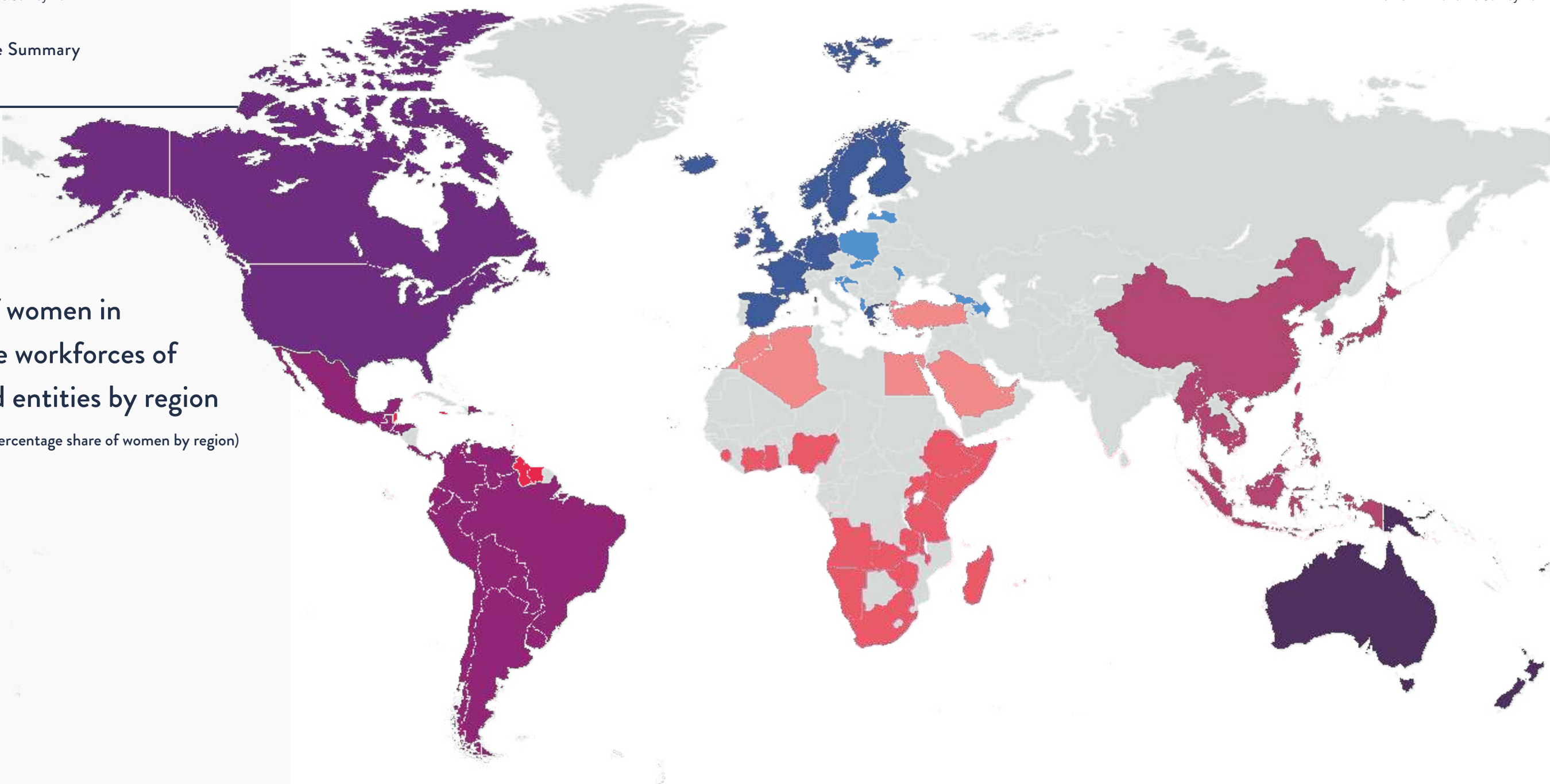
Women seafarers remain vastly underrepresented, comprising only 1% (2,223) of the 211,750 active seafarers reported in the 2024 survey data. The majority of women seafarers in the companies surveyed were from the Philippines, followed by Greece, Argentina, Canada, and India, Nigeria, Türkiye, and the United States. The highest proportion of female seafarers served on bulk carriers and oil tankers.

Conclusion

There is a clear need for sustained efforts to improve gender diversity in maritime. By addressing issues such as recruitment and career advancement, as well as leveraging the insights from this report, organisations can develop more effective strategies to foster gender diversity and create a more inclusive maritime industry. Collaborative efforts among stakeholders will be essential in driving meaningful change across the sector.



Figure 01  
Share of women in maritime workforces of surveyed entities by region  
(Number and percentage share of women by region)



\*Data based on responses from participating entities in the 2024 Survey; not necessarily representative of the entire sector.

Disclaimer :  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Maritime Organization.

Region	Total number of employees in the maritime sector (men + women)*	Total number of women employees	Percentage of women in the maritime sector workforce
Africa	47,303	6,853	14.49%
Arab states and Mediterranean region	45,631	5,918	12.97%
Asia	124,161	23,069	18.58%
Caribbean	7,128	1,730	24.27%
Eastern Europe	2,728	500	18.33%
Europe	130,581	29,297	22.44%
Latin America	208,490	39,540	18.96%
North America	372,366	68,133	18.30%
Pacific	6,773	1,780	26.28%
Grand Total	945,161	176,820	18.71%





# Member States Survey

01

# Introduction

The Women in Maritime Survey 2024 was undertaken to obtain baseline data on the number of women working in the maritime and ocean fields, and to better understand their roles. The Survey, intended to run every three years, offers a comparison to data gathered from the inaugural Survey carried out by IMO and WISTA International in 2021. This work supports the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals<sup>1</sup> (UN SDGs) by having comparable data that will assist all stakeholders in creating programmes and proposing policies aimed at increasing the participation of women within the maritime industry.

For this second Women in Maritime Survey, data from Member States was gathered during 2024. In total, 94 out of the 176 IMO Member States filled in the Survey, with 88 providing complete sets of data. This was a significant increase on the 2021 Survey, where 45 complete data sets were provided.

Focal points appointed by individual Member States gathered data from across all relevant maritime arms

of their national governments in order to support the in-depth analysis of gender diversity trends, outlining successful initiatives, gaps in gender equality, and opportunities for future development within the maritime workforces of Member States.

Although the significant increase in participation of the Survey indicates growing support for a more gender balanced workforce in the maritime public sector, the data reveals that there are varying levels of progress being made towards this important goal.

A key gap identified was the limited availability of flexible working arrangements, which affects not only women, but also men who wish to take on caregiving responsibilities, creating barriers to career advancement and retention. Addressing this issue will be critical to fostering an inclusive and enabling maritime workspace. The use of flexible working arrangements for women, and men, requires careful planning and preparation on the part of all concerned, but a helpful brief has been compiled by UN Women<sup>2</sup> on the benefits flexible working can bring to an organisation.

Education and training remain vital components of gender diversity efforts, ushering in a new generation of talented workers. The 2024 Survey introduced a more detailed questionnaire related to female maritime graduates, distinguishing between national maritime academy graduates (specifically seafaring training) and maritime university graduates (naval architecture, maritime law, marine engineering, oceanography, etc.), which allows for more in-depth analysis. These insights will help policymakers and industry leaders tailor educational initiatives to better support women entering

the sector.

Women's participation in IMO meetings and international maritime governance was also examined. While some countries demonstrated strong female representation in global decision-making forums, others lagged behind, highlighting an area for improvement in gender-inclusive diplomacy and leadership at the international level.

In line with the objectives of the Survey, IMO Member States are encouraged to prioritise the collection of accurate, sex-disaggregated data, which is key to identifying gender disparities, guiding decision-making, and ensuring targeted interventions. As highlighted by UN Women, this data is essential for monitoring progress and assessing the impact of investments in gender equality. Governments are also urged to strengthen mechanisms for tracking financial allocations for gender and diversity, building on actions already taken by the UN and IMO. Despite global commitments, there is still significant underinvestment in SDG 5. Addressing this funding gap, alongside better data systems, is critical for effective gender-responsive budgeting and international reporting.

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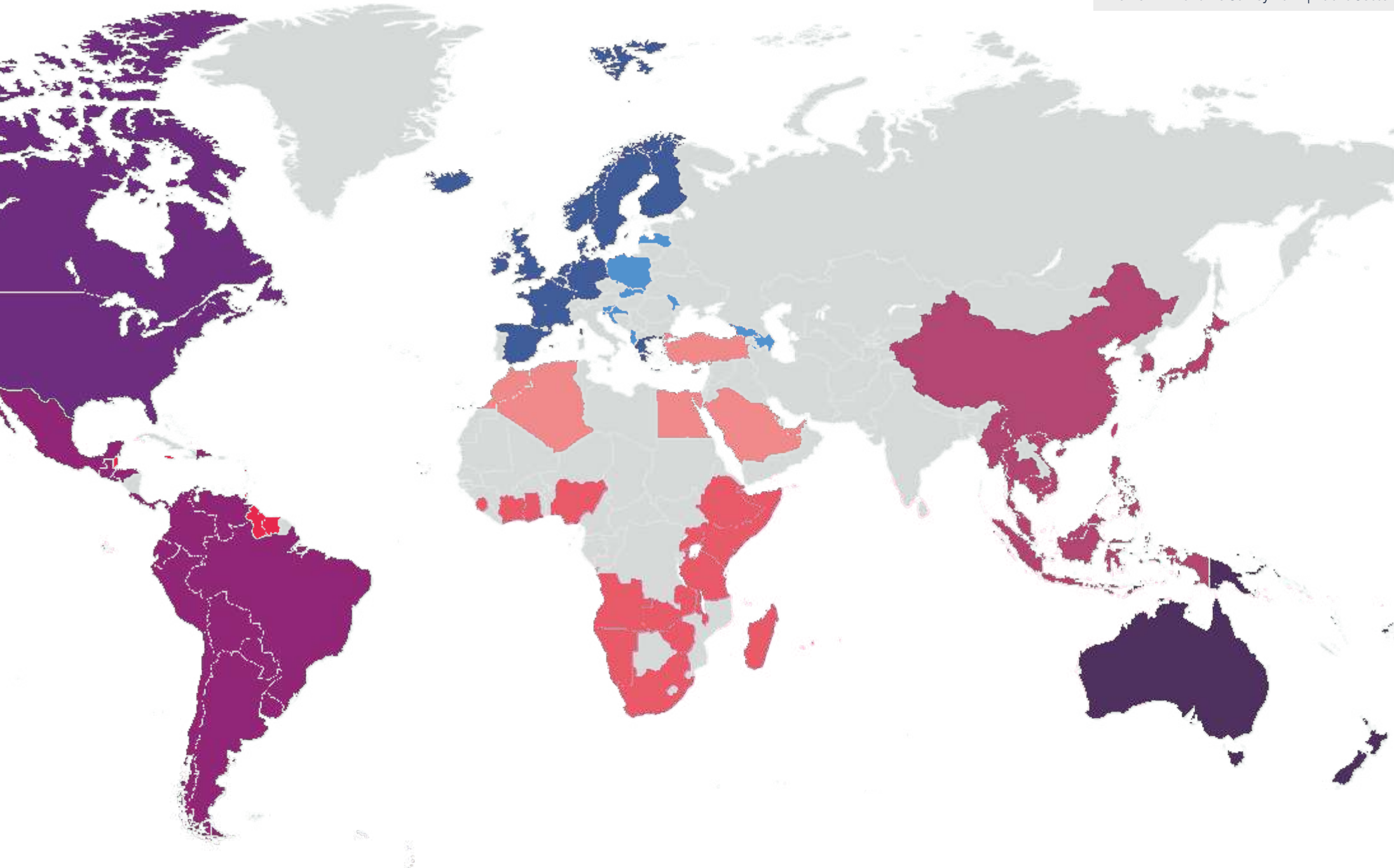
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Figure 02  
Regional focus:  
Women in the public sector  
workforce

(Number and percentage share of women IMO Member State maritime workforces, by region)

\*Data reflects only the responses of Member States that participated in the 2024 Survey and may not fully represent the entire region.

Disclaimer :  
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















Region		Total number of employees in the maritime public sector (men + women)*	Total number of women employed in the maritime public sector	Percentage of women employed in the maritime public sector	
	Africa	38,152	5,930	15.54%	
	Arab states and Mediterranean region	23,411	4,856	20.74%	
	Asia	89,406	17,321	19.37%	
	Caribbean	6,817	1,533	22.49%	
	Eastern Europe	2,589	434	16.76%	
	Europe	59,179	13,886	23.46%	
	Latin America	193,086	36,551	18.93%	
	North America	354,258	66,942	18.90%	
	Pacific	5,572	1,375	24.68%	
Grand Total		772,470	148,828	19.27%	

Figure 03: Women in maritime authorities

02

# Women in maritime administrations and other institutions

The representation of women in maritime authorities has evolved significantly between 2021 and 2024, reflecting broader shifts in gender diversity across key sectors. A notable change in reporting methodology involved replacing the category of 'representatives to promote maritime trade' with 'Port State Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)' to improve clarity based on feedback from the 2021 Survey. Port State MOUs are agreements between maritime authorities aimed at implementing a harmonised port State control system to uphold international standards.





02 Women in Administrations and other institutions

Overall, female representation has shown an upward trend in key areas. The proportion of female diplomatic staff across the 88 States who submitted full data sets increased to 1,029 in 2024, from 771 women in 2021. The proportion of women among IMO representatives rose to 28% from 21%. The presence of women in Search and Rescue (SAR) services improved, climbing to 15% from 10%, reflecting greater inclusion in operational maritime safety roles. Similarly, government-owned ports and terminals saw female representation grow to 25% from 19%, and the updated category of Port State MOUs reported 25% female participation.

However, not all categories experienced growth. The share of women customs staff declined slightly to 16% (67,538 out of a total 298,284) from 20% (13,578 out of a total 63,920), although this is largely a reflection of a larger group of respondents. It is expected that the figures in this report will change not only due to trends in the maritime public sector workforce, but also as more Member States gather and share their data to help paint a fuller picture.

The recruitment and retention of women into senior roles is a core element when it comes to expanding gender parity in an organisation. This makes data about the age distribution of women in maritime authorities extremely relevant, as it maps out the career path open to women as they acquire more skills in the workplace. Interestingly, there were no reported women staff in the 18–24 age category in 2024, except for Argentina, where this group forms the second-largest female workforce. The lack of junior women members of the public sector workforce could be indicative of systemic issues in recruiting young women into the maritime

Figure 03: Women in maritime authorities (contd.)



02 Women in Administrations and other institutions

arm of national governments.

This finding aligns with insights from the ‘Women in the Workplace 2024: The 10th-anniversary report’<sup>1</sup> by Mckinsey and Company, which found that “women continue to face barriers at the beginning of the pipeline. They remain less likely than men to be hired into entry-level roles, which leaves them underrepresented from the start”. Unless Member States work to increase their recruitment of young women in the coming three-year period, this trend may impact the number of women in the 25-34 age group by the time the next survey is conducted in 2027.

The majority of female staff in the public sector fall within the 25–44 age range, with 63 Member States identifying this as their largest group- which is a shift from the previous Survey. The proportion of women aged 45–54 has also risen, with 17 Member States citing this as their most representative age bracket, up from five Member States in 2021.

The data shows that Cyprus and Nigeria maintained the same workforce gender distribution as in 2021. Certain Member States, including Azerbaijan, Monaco, Norway, Panama, Somalia, Spain, and the United Kingdom, generally have older female workforces compared to other Member States. While Azerbaijan and Somalia reported their second-largest female workforce in the 25–34 age group, Norway, Panama, Spain, and the United Kingdom identified the 45–54 age range as their second-largest category of female staff. In 2021, Cyprus, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Nigeria and the United States had cited the age range of 45-54 being their largest grouping of female workers.

Figure 03: Women in maritime authorities (contd.)



\*IMO Associate Member



## 02 Women in Administrations and other institutions

These variations in gender and age representation underscore the importance of analysing underlying drivers of change - particularly around recruiting young women into the workforce. An article published by the World Economic Forum<sup>2</sup> states that “Young people in certain regions and many young women are not seeing the benefits of the economic recovery.” Furthermore, the report ‘Changing face of the youth labour market’<sup>3</sup>, published in December 2024 by The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) explores employer recruitment patterns and perceptions of young workers in the UK - and points out that although many individuals enter the workforce with extended academic qualifications, they may struggle with the skills needed for jobs and could benefit by entering the workforce earlier (perhaps through apprenticeships). Both pieces of research highlight the challenges faced by young people aged 16–24 in entering the workforce, such as a decline in vocational pathways, apprenticeship participation and employer perceptions of young workers' readiness. It underscores the need for enhanced support and structured opportunities to better prepare young people for work.

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Figure 04: Women staff in management within maritime administration, specialist technical & operational, & support roles



03

# Women in Mid-Management, Core and Support Roles in Maritime Administrations

There are a total of 146,460 people working in maritime administrations, with women accounting for 24% of the workforce (34,629 women). Of this total, 28,374 women work in mid-management, core maritime, and support roles.



03 Women in Mid-Management, Core and Support Roles in Maritime Administrations

There are known challenges to recruiting women into maritime and other Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) sectors. According to research by the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET)<sup>1</sup>, women are not encouraged to think about STEM careers in school and many get put off by how male dominated STEM industries are. This could mean that women are not well placed to have the technical skills needed to secure positions in niche sectors such as maritime.

It is thus not surprising that the largest group of women are found in support roles, which require the least technical skills. The data shows that the percentage of women in the workforce decreases both in line with seniority as well as skill level required - with middle management resting at the lowest figures for this workforce bracket.

Of this public sector workforce, an estimated 3,300 women hold mid-management positions. This suggests that women occupy around 17% of all management roles in maritime administrations. While this represents a growing share, further efforts are needed to enhance female representation in leadership positions, as women are outnumbered by their male counterparts. It should be noted that the 2021 Survey did not track this metric, and so the data gathered via the 2024 questionnaire sets the baseline against which this will be measured in the future.

Core maritime roles, which encompass key personnel, specialist technical staff, and operational roles, form the backbone of maritime administrations. The total workforce in these roles stands at 43,773, with women comprising 9,048 of

Figure 04: Women staff in management within maritime administration, specialist technical & operational, & support roles (contd.)



03 Women in Mid-Management, Core and Support Roles in Maritime Administrations

this figure. This indicates that women account for roughly 21% of core maritime roles.

Support functions, which include non-operational technical and administrative roles, finance divisions, and service roles, play an essential role in many of the administrative functions of the public sector. The total workforce in support functions is estimated at 55,650, with 16,035 women employed in these roles. This equates to around 29% of the total support workforce, showcasing a relatively higher representation of women compared to management and core maritime roles.

While women are increasingly represented in mid-management, core, and support roles within maritime administrations, disparities persist, particularly in leadership and technical positions. Addressing this trend will require dedicated efforts, including actively recruiting younger women into STEM careers, offering training to shore up technical skills and ensuring that there is cultural change to create an environment in which women can thrive.

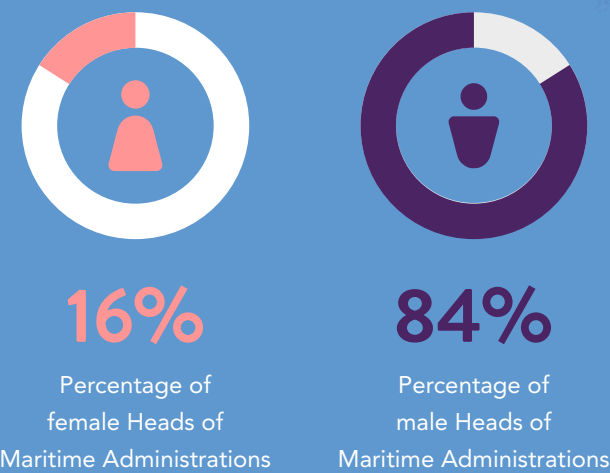
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Figure 04: Women staff in management within maritime administration, specialist technical & operational, & support roles (contd.)



\*IMO Associate Member



Pathways to leadership for women are a vital tool to ensure that a sector is able to retain skilled female employees. Having visible women leaders is also critical to setting the tone for gender inclusive cultures, particularly in traditionally male dominated sectors such as maritime.

Data from the 2024 survey shows that there has been a 2% increase in female Heads of Maritime Administrations against the baseline from three years ago. Women now account for 16% of this workforce, with the largest concentration of female Heads of Maritime Administrations being found in the global north.

It must be noted that some of the countries that currently have men in this post may have had women in these roles in the past, meaning that the overall trend is what is of interest rather than the individual countries listed in the graph.

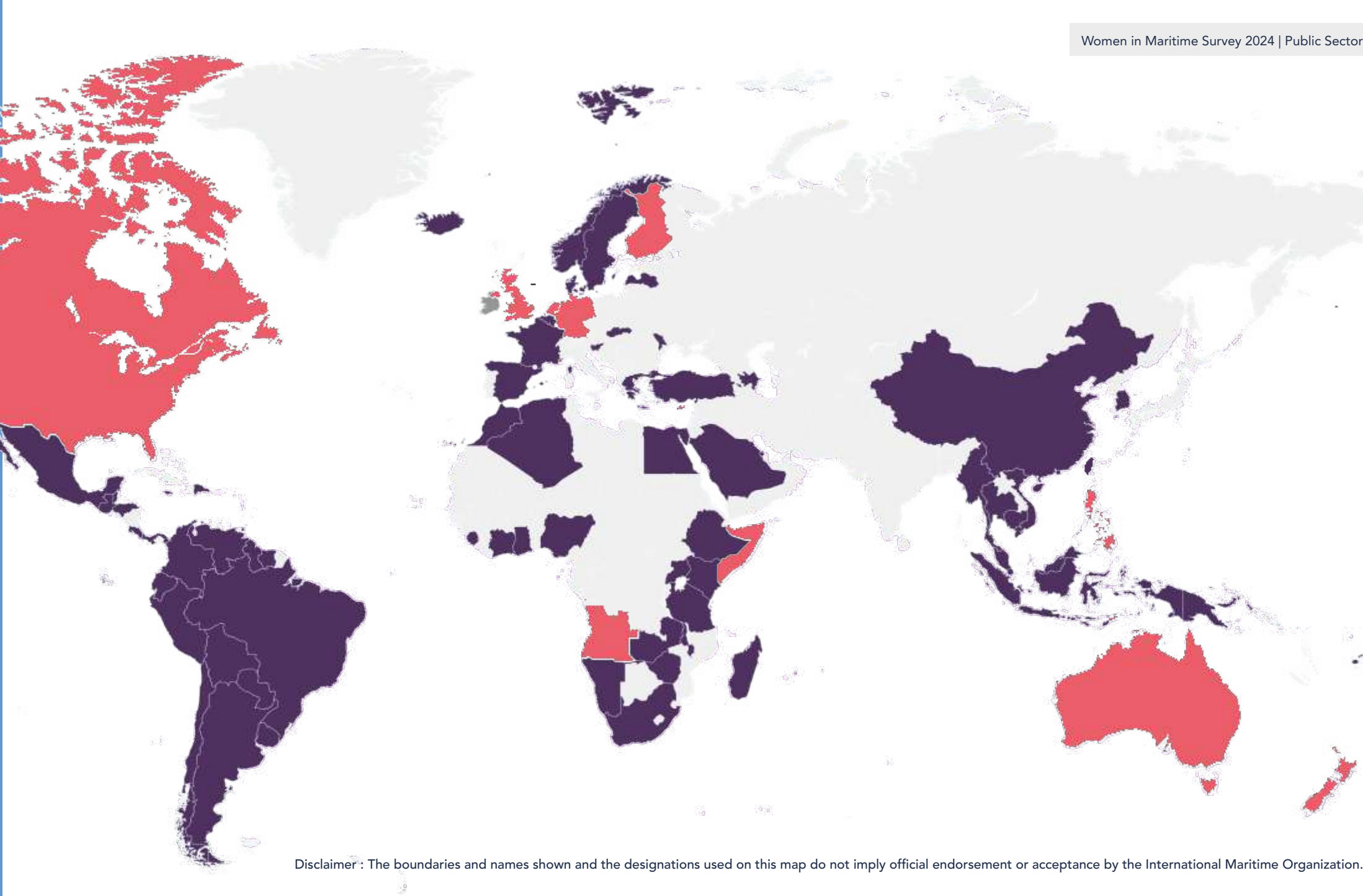


Figure 05: Gender representation across Heads of Maritime Administrations

FEMALE HEAD OF MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

Angola; Australia; Canada; Cyprus; Finland; Germany; Monaco; Kingdom of the Netherlands; New Zealand; Philippines; Somalia; Timor-Leste; United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland; United States of America.

OTHER GENDER HEAD OF MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

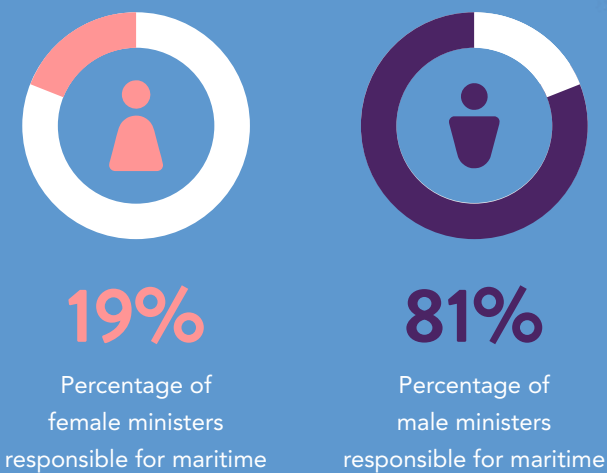
Ireland (This government does not have a single position in charge of the country's maritime administration, but has two roles - one of which, at the time of the 2024 Survey, was occupied by a man and the other by a woman).

MALE HEAD OF MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

Algeria; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Azerbaijan; Bahrain; Belgium; Belize; Plurinational State of Bolivia; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Côte D'Ivoire; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; Ethiopia; Fiji; France; Ghana; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guyana; Honduras; Iceland; Indonesia; Jamaica; Kenya; Latvia; Madagascar; Malawi; Malaysia; Mauritius; Mexico; Morocco; Myanmar; Namibia; Nigeria; Norway;

Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Republic of Korea; Republic of Moldova; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; San Marino; Sao Tome and Principe; Saudi Arabia; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Thailand; Trinidad and Tobago; Türkiye; Uganda; United Republic of Tanzania; Uruguay; Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; Viet Nam; Zambia; Zimbabwe. Faroes\*; Hong Kong, China\*.





A total of 18 Member States had a female minister responsible for the maritime sector in place in 2024, meaning that women accounted for just 19% of the workforce in this grouping. However, the global distribution of countries is quite wide, with a number of countries in the global south contributing to this figure.

Ministers are often appointed by political parties that come into power and thus the gender data pertaining to individuals in this post will fluctuate depending on national elections.

As ministers are very visible members of the public sector, having female representatives in these roles can promote the sector to potential female employees. Female ministers may also boost visibility of the private maritime sector when visiting schools and other educational institutes, thus supporting the overall recruitment of women into the sector.

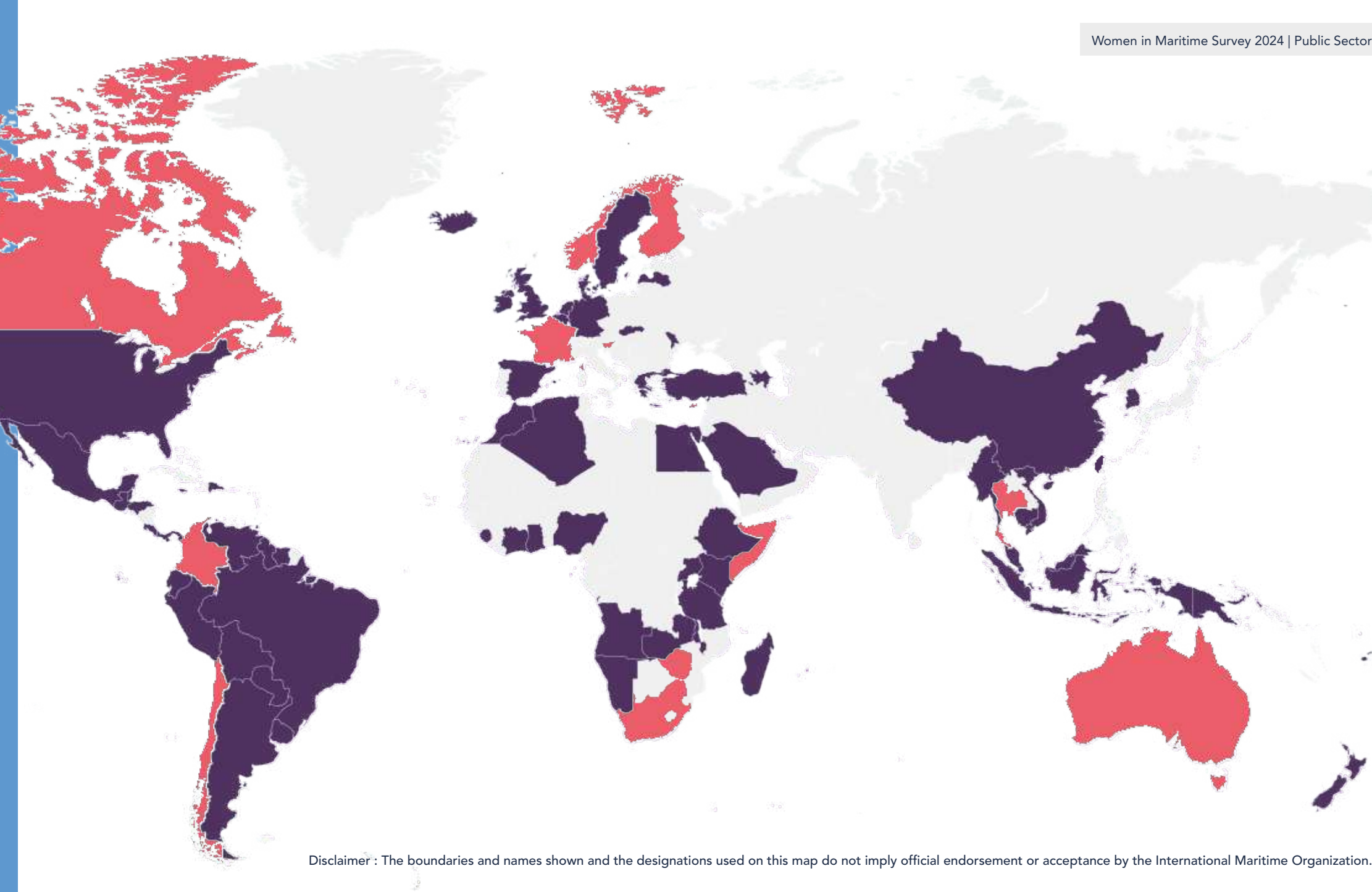


Figure 06: Gender representation across ministers responsible for maritime

FEMALE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR MARITIME

Australia; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Cyprus; Dominica; Finland; France; Monaco; Norway; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Slovenia; Somalia; South Africa; Thailand; Zimbabwe. Hong Kong, China\*.

MALE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR MARITIME

Algeria; Angola; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Azerbaijan; Bahrain; Belgium; Belize; Plurinational State of Bolivia; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Costa Rica; Côte D'Ivoire; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; Ethiopia; Fiji; Ghana; Germany; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guyana; Honduras; Iceland; Indonesia; Jamaica; Kenya; Latvia; Madagascar; Malawi; Malaysia; Mauritius; Mexico; Morocco; Myanmar; Namibia; The Kingdom of the Netherlands; New Zealand; Nigeria; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Republic of Korea; Republic of Moldova; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; San Marino; Sao Tome and Principe; Saudi Arabia; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Slovakia; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Timor-Leste; Trinidad and Tobago; Türkiye; Uganda; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United Republic of Tanzania; United States of America; Uruguay; Venezuela; Viet Nam; Zambia. Faroes\*.

\*IMO Associate Member



04

# Women in Maritime Education

The Survey results provide a detailed overview of government-run maritime training institutes and the participation of women in maritime education and employment. Out of the surveyed Member States, a majority (58%) confirmed the existence of government-operated training academies for seafarers, while the remaining 42% did not have such institutions. These academies play a crucial role in equipping individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications for careers in the maritime sector.

Figure 07: Women in maritime education



04 Women in Maritime Education

According to the data, a total of 9,544 individuals were employed in national maritime academies that cater specifically to seafarer training. Of these, a total of 3,199 employees were women, representing approximately 34% of the workforce. Amounting to about a third of the workforce, women are more likely to be found in educational roles than in some of the other sectors, although there is still room for increased representation. It should be noted that some Member States did not submit the data required under this section of the Survey.

In 2023, a total of 68,821 individuals graduated from national maritime academies dedicated to training seafarers. The total number of women who graduated was 10,459 (15%). Additionally, 10,252 individuals graduated from maritime-related university degrees in 2023. The total number of female maritime-related university graduates accounted for 22% (2,304).

For the purpose of the Survey, a maritime-related university is defined as a government-run university, offering maritime-related courses such as naval architecture, maritime law, marine engineering, oceanography, etc. This suggests that while women are engaging in maritime education at the university level, they remain underrepresented compared to their male counterparts, a factor common in STEM subjects<sup>1</sup>- a facto discussed earlier in this report.

It is vital that the workforce grows in tandem with demand. A report from the Maritime Just Transition Task Force<sup>2</sup> has identified that up to 800,000 seafarers may require additional training by the mid-2030s to handle low-carbon fuels. This challenge is just one that maritime is facing, with digitalisation

Figure 07: Women in maritime education (contd.)



04 Women in Maritime Education

and automation also high on the agenda, requiring skilled staff and an identified pathway for recruitment and training. While some seafarers may undergo training via an employer in the private sector, it is vital that governments - particularly those looking to create equitable and decent work opportunities for their citizens - support greater training initiatives and ensure that women are encouraged to take up careers at sea.

AT A GLANCE

National academy graduates	
Total graduates	68,821
Women graduates	10,459
Percentage of women graduates	15%
Graduates from maritime universities	
Total graduates	10,252
Women graduates	2,304
Percentage of women graduates	22%

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Figure 07: Women in maritime education (contd.)



\*IMO Associate Member



Figure 08: Representation of women at IMO meetings

05

# Implementing gender policies

The promotion of gender equality within UN Member States has been prominent in recent years, evidenced by the adoption of a political declaration on gender equality<sup>1</sup> in March 2025. The Declaration recommitts Member States to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including emerging forms such as digital violence, online harassment, and cyberbullying. Furthermore, it acknowledges that achieving progress in these areas requires substantial resources and financing. “Thirty years after Beijing with all the weight of evidence before us, women’s rights and civil society organisations are being starved of the resources they need”, stated Lopa Banerjee, Director of the Civil Society Division at UN Women. The latest Survey data also provides a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which Member States are implementing policies and initiatives aimed at increasing female representation and support within maritime administrations.



05 Implementing gender policies

Member States send representatives to attend gatherings that are held at IMO throughout the year. Individuals are often selected to attend these gatherings based on their technical expertise, as many meetings and working groups offer the opportunity to shape legislation. Subject matter experts often attend specific committee meetings, but some Member States may opt to have just a few delegates attend multiple committee meetings and working groups.

Attending these meetings in person allows representatives the opportunities to build diplomatic ties with each other as well as relevant stakeholders, such as NGOs and IGOs. Some of the gatherings that these representatives may attend include:

- Meeting of the IMO Assembly, which consists of all Member States and is the highest governing body of the Organization. It is responsible for approving the work programme, voting the budget and determining the IMO’s financial arrangements.
- Meetings of the IMO Council. All Member States are welcomed to attend Council meetings, but only Council members can participate in the decision-making. Council acts as the Executive Organ of IMO and is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the Organization.

IMO has five Committees:

- The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC)
- The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC)
- The Legal Committee (LEG)
- The Technical Cooperation Committee (TC)
- The Facilitation Committee (FAL)

Figure 08: Representation of women at IMO meetings (contd.)



05 Implementing gender policies

TC has the largest proportion of female delegates, accounting for 40% of total delegates from Member States that responded to the Survey. Both MEPC and the LEG boast about 38% of women attendees, followed by the Council meetings. MSC is the meeting with the most male representatives, with just 23% of attendees being women. It is of note that the meeting itself is chaired by Mrs. Mayte Medina of the United States of America - who was the first woman to hold this position.

AT A GLANCE

Percentage of women representing Member States at IMO meetings

Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC)	38%
IMO Assembly	33%
IMO Council meetings	37%
Maritime Safety Committee (MSC)	23%
Legal Committee (LEG)	38%
Technical Cooperation Committee (TC)	40%
Facilitation Committee (FAL)	33%

Figure 08: Representation of women at IMO meetings (contd.)



\*IMO Associate Member



05 Implementing gender policies

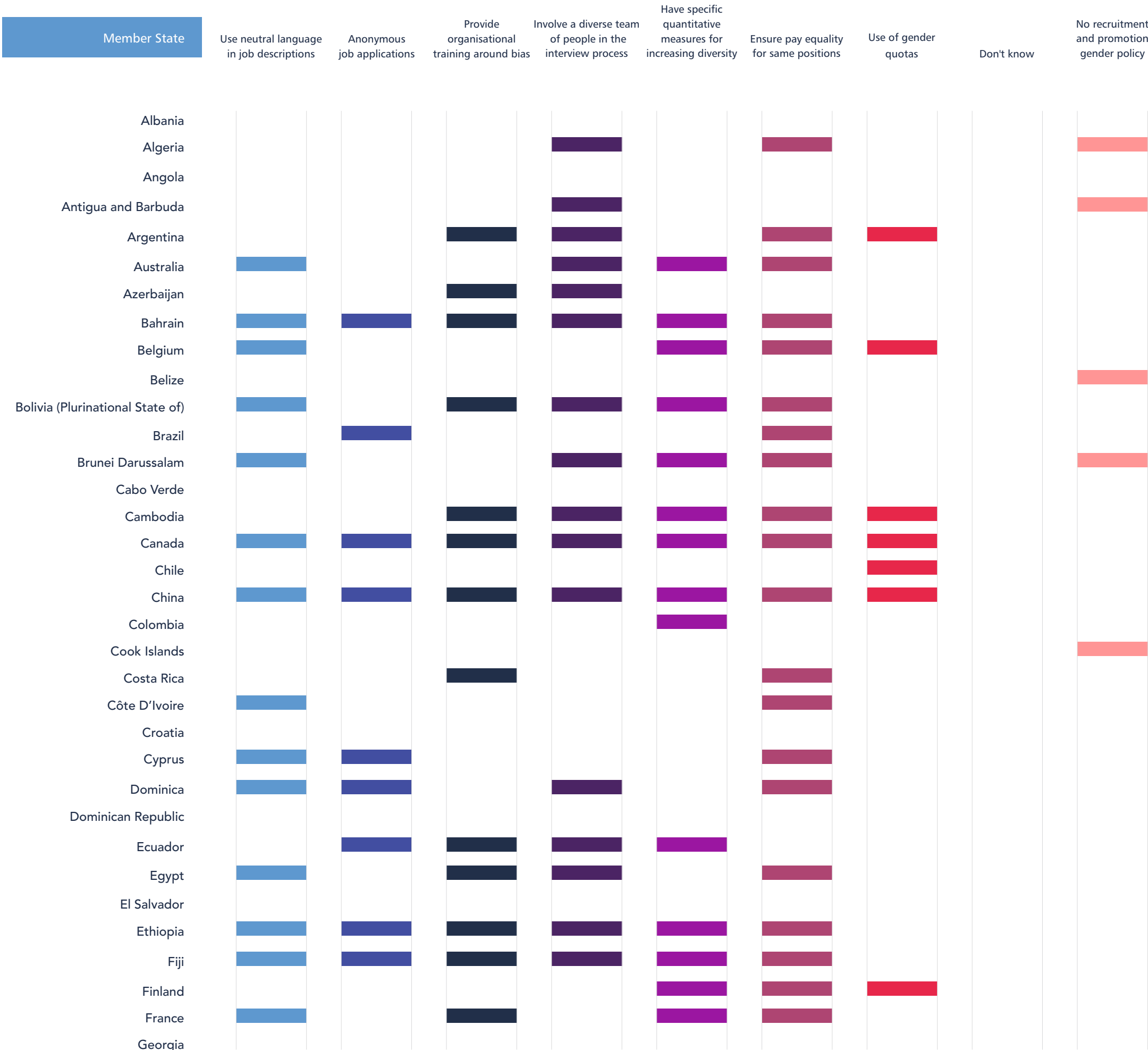
The 2024 Survey includes data from nearly twice as many respondents as the 2021 edition, granting us a broader view of gender representation and policy implementation across Member States. Seventy-three Member States contributed insights into their gender equality policies and initiatives, offering valuable comparative data on how various policies correlate with female participation in the sector.

These policies include measures such as the use of gender-neutral language in job descriptions, anonymity of candidates being assessed, anonymised candidate assessments, the inclusion of diverse interview panels, and other inclusive practices. Some of the States reported the use of gender quotas to actively recruit women into their workforces and specific policies aimed at eliminating the gender pay gap by standardising salaries based on position held.

The findings in maritime demonstrate a lack of consistency across IMO Member States, with some making strong headway in gender mainstreaming their policies, while others lag behind. Among the reporting Member States, 35 have implemented five or more policies focused on addressing gender equality within their workforce, indicating a growing recognition of the importance of institutional measures to support women in the sector.

Conversely, 17 reported that they had no gender-related policies or initiatives in place. A similar number, 15, do not have gender-responsible recruitment policies in place. The overall findings indicate that the majority of Member States responding to this Survey are actively working to make their recruitment more gender balanced.

Figure 09: Promoting women in maritime authorities



05 Implementing gender policies

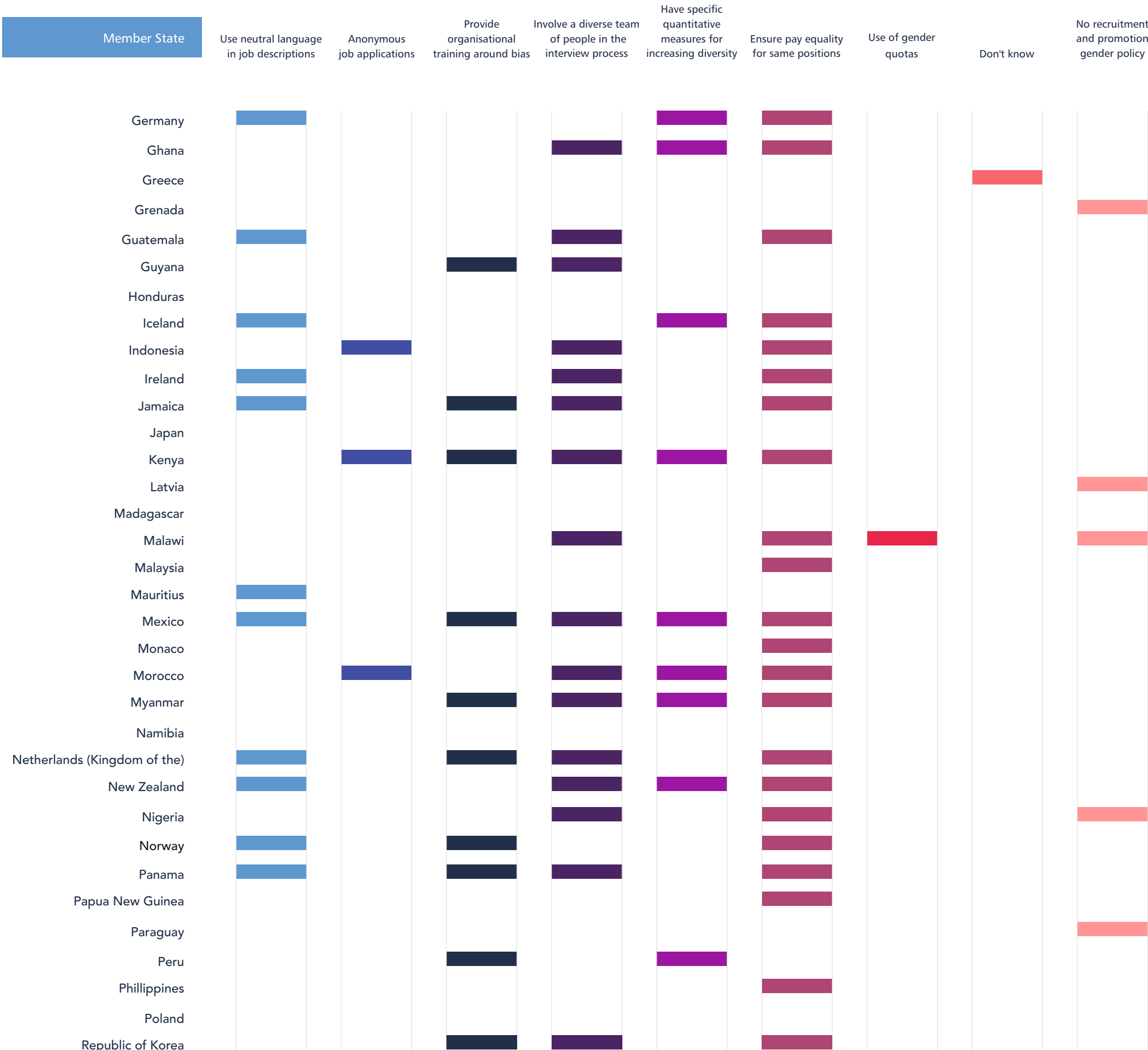
It is vital that they collect data to assess the effectiveness of their policies and update them as new best practices emerge.

AT A GLANCE

Use neutral language in job descriptions	36
Anonymous job applications	17
Provide organisational training around bias	30
Involve a diverse team of people in the interview process	49
Have specific quantitative measures for increasing diversity	31
Ensure pay equality for same positions	61
Use of gender quotas	16
I don't know	3
No recruitment and promotion gender policy	15

In addition to the recruitment and retention policies highlighted in figure 9, a number of surveyed Member States also have other gender policies in place. The graphs on pages 58 - 63 provide an overview of these policies, one of which is appointing a gender focal point. The concept of gender focal points has proven beneficial in various settings, as outlined by UN Women<sup>2</sup>. These focal points play a key role in advancing gender equality within organizations, ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into decision-making processes. While the UN has established Gender Focal Points to drive its internal gender equality agenda, Member States can similarly benefit from appointing gender focal points within their national administrations. These appointments would

Figure 09: Promoting women in maritime authorities (contd.)



05 Implementing gender policies

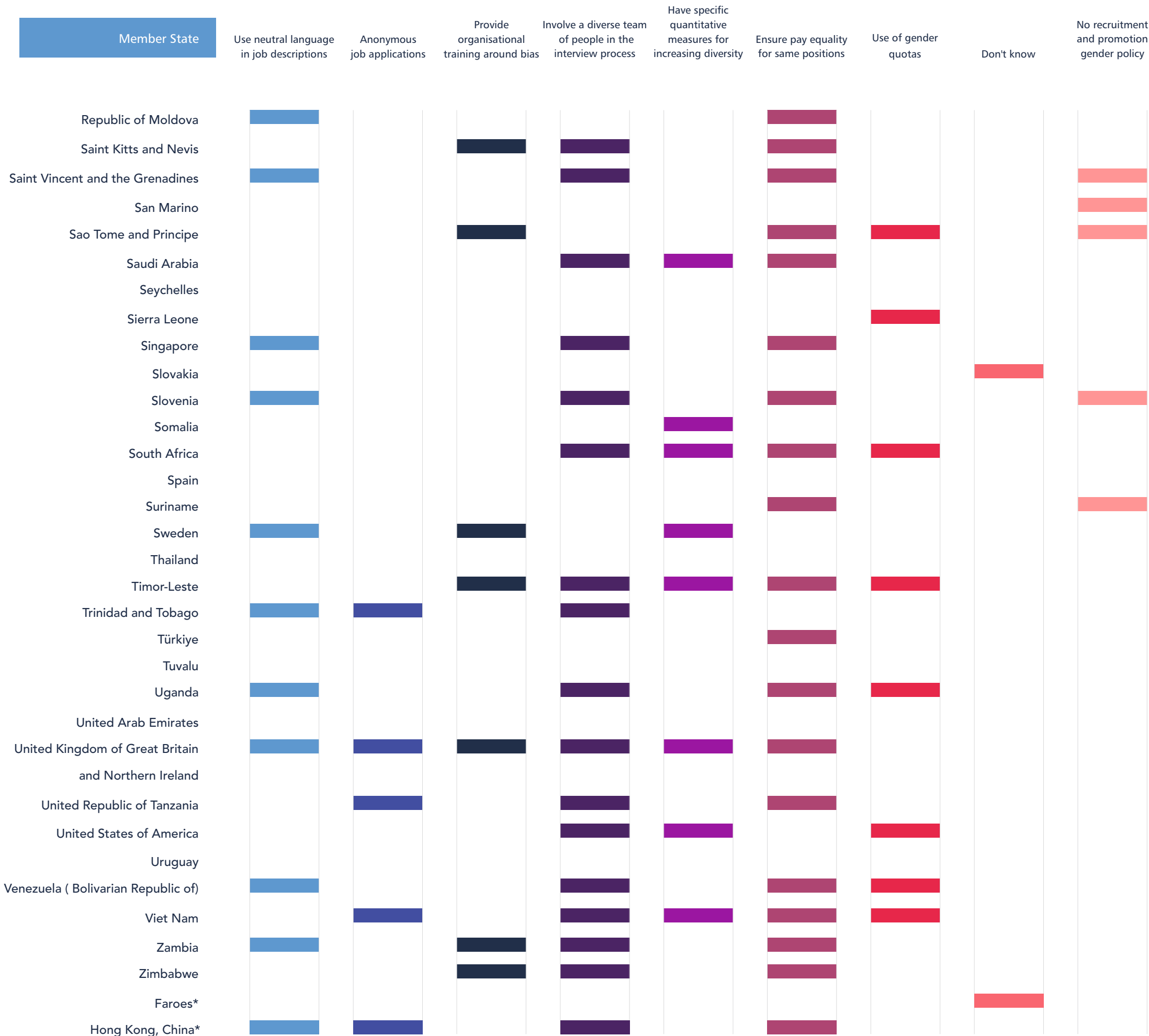
contribute to advancing parity and fostering more inclusive environments.

It is heartening that 34 Member States have already designated focal points for gender and diversity, while 32 of the 94 respondents have implemented gender/diversity training programmes.

Additionally, 24 of the 94 have launched gender awareness campaigns to promote inclusivity. Eighteen Member States have introduced mentorship schemes, reflecting an effort to provide structured career development opportunities for women in maritime administrations. Furthermore, 55 Member States have established sexual harassment policies, highlighting an awareness of the need to ensure safe working environments.

The following graph provides a detailed overview of the specific policies and initiatives to foster gender equality that have been implemented by responding Member States. It is of note that paid parental leave and policies to minimise sexual harassment are some of the most widely implemented policies across the globe.

Figure 09: Promoting women in maritime authorities (contd.)



\*IMO Associate Member



Figure 10: Promoting women in maritime authorities - other policies/initiatives

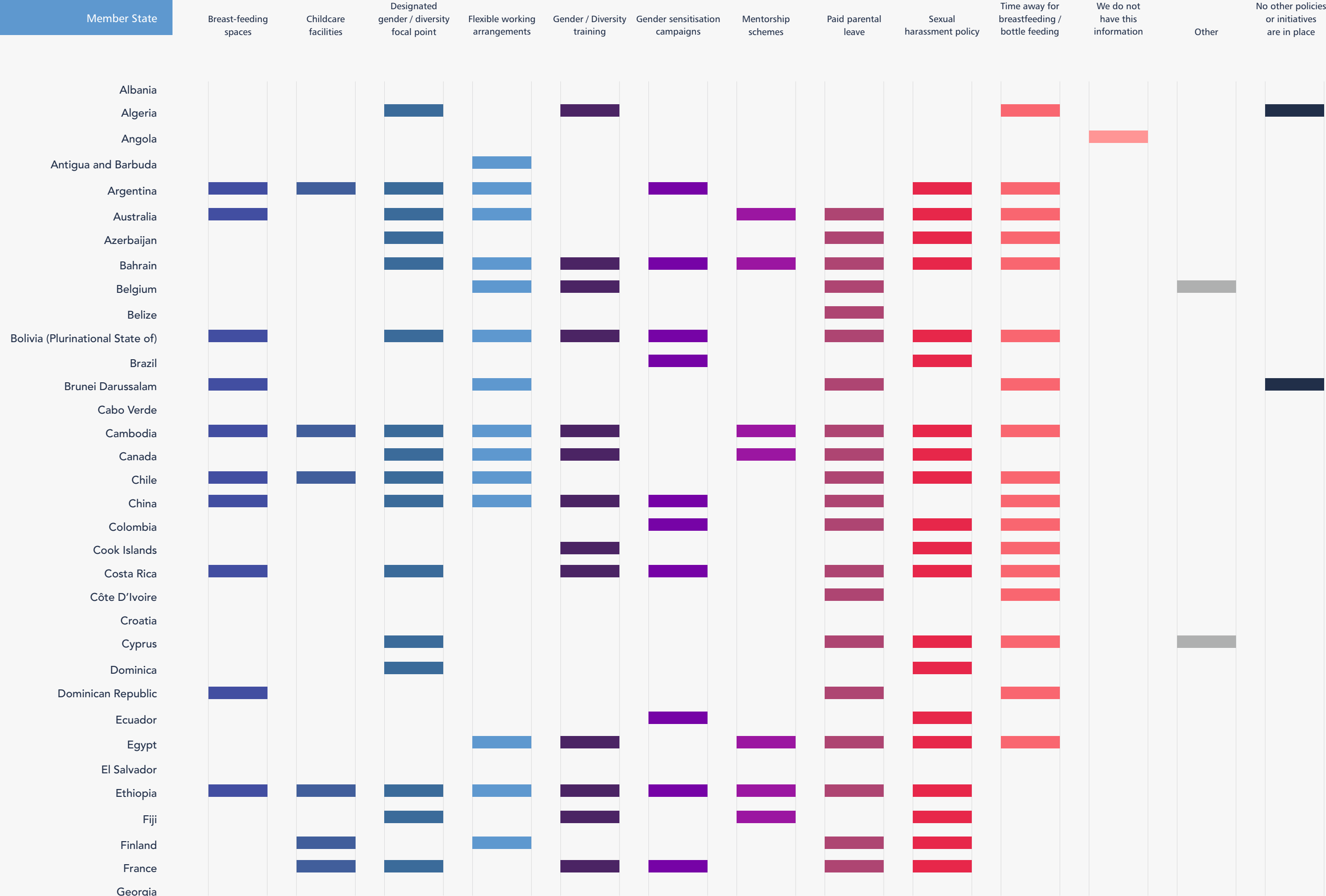


Figure 10: Promoting women in maritime authorities - other policies/initiatives (contd.)

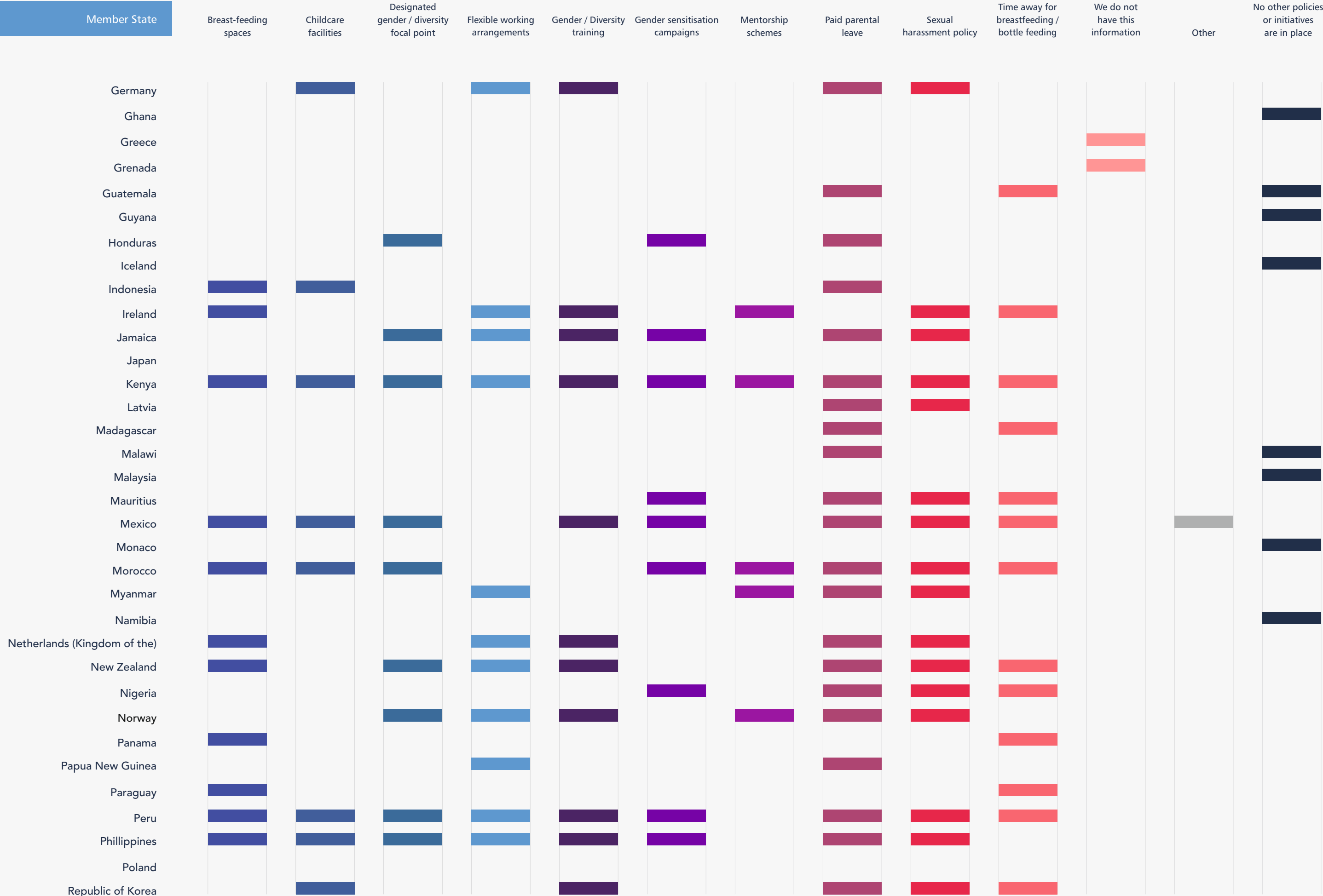
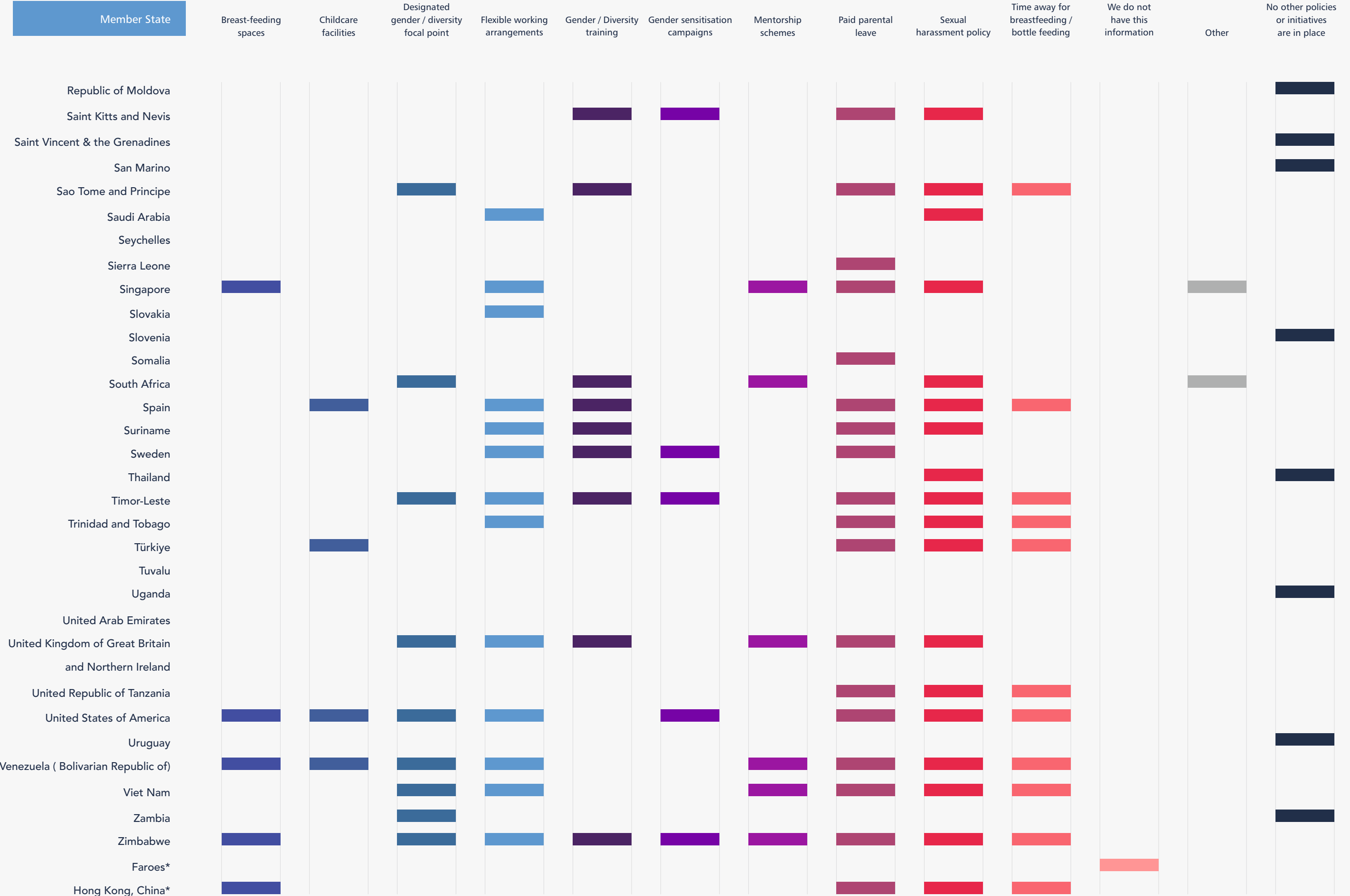


Figure 10: Promoting women in maritime authorities - other policies/initiatives (contd.)





05 Implementing gender policies

Beyond these structured measures, various Member States have adopted specific policies to enhance gender equality in maritime administrations. Notable examples include:

- **Anti-Discrimination Policies:** Some Member States have introduced broader anti-discrimination policies, specifically targeting issues affecting LGBTQ+ individuals, ensuring an inclusive environment for all employees.
- **Recognition and Awareness Initiatives:** The Cyprus Shipping Deputy Ministry has launched an annual Cyprus Shipping Gender Equality Award. This award acknowledges individuals and initiatives that promote gender equality and empower women in the shipping industry through various communication channels such as posters, brochures, newspapers, and social media.

Member States without specific gender policies within maritime administrations are operating within national policies which support women. For instance:

- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not have specific maritime gender initiatives but offers maternity benefits under the National Insurance (Benefits) Regulations 1994 (as amended, Cap 296), ensuring maternity support for all women.
- South Africa includes maternity leave provisions as part of the Basic Conditions of Employment, ensuring female maritime workers have access to necessary parental support.

The expanded Survey data illustrates a growing commitment among Member States to promote

gender equality within their maritime workforces. While some countries have implemented multiple initiatives to support women, obvious gaps remain - particularly in Member States with no targeted policies. Strengthening gender policies, providing professional development opportunities, and ensuring safe and inclusive work environments will be key in further advancing women's participation in the maritime sector. An inclusive work environment fosters an equitable distribution of caregiving responsibilities, improving work-life balance, enhanced mental well-being and greater motivation and productivity for both working parents, not just women.

AT A GLANCE

Breastfeeding spaces	26
Childcare facilities	18
Designated gender/ diversity focal point	34
Flexible working arrangements	39
Gender / Diversity training	32
Gender sensitisation campaigns	24
Mentorship schemes	18
Paid parental leave	60
Sexual harassment policy	55
Time away for breastfeeding / bottle feeding	40
We do not have this information	4
Other	5
No other policies / initiatives are in place	17

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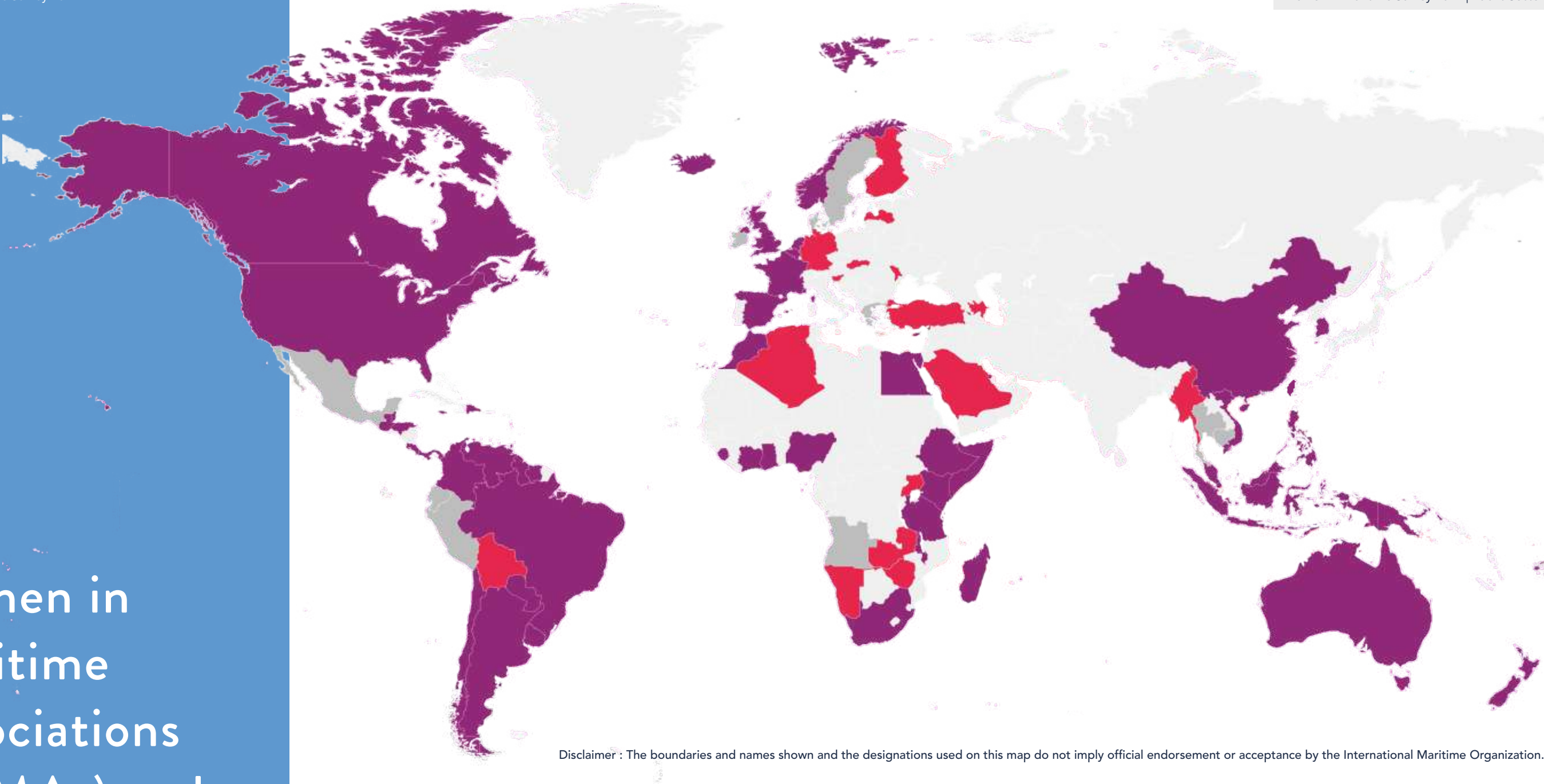
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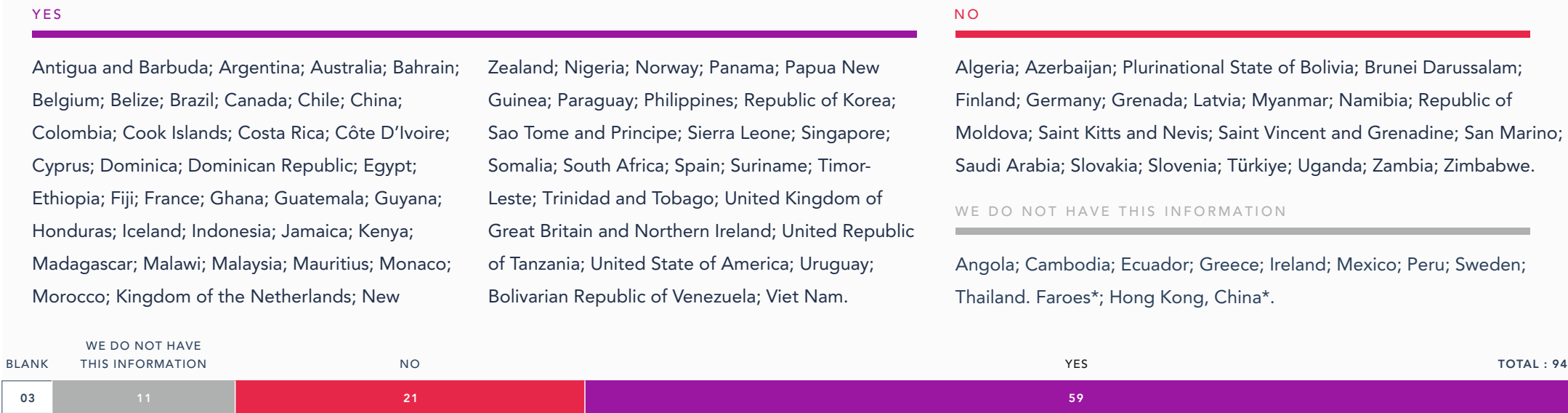
# 06 Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs) and other networks

Women's networks and associations in the maritime sector continue to expand, playing a vital role in supporting female professionals and fostering greater gender inclusivity. They are, however, in need of continued support and Member States' formal recognition.



Disclaimer : The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Maritime Organization.

Figure 11: Does your Member State have networks or associations for women employed in the maritime, port or fishing sectors?



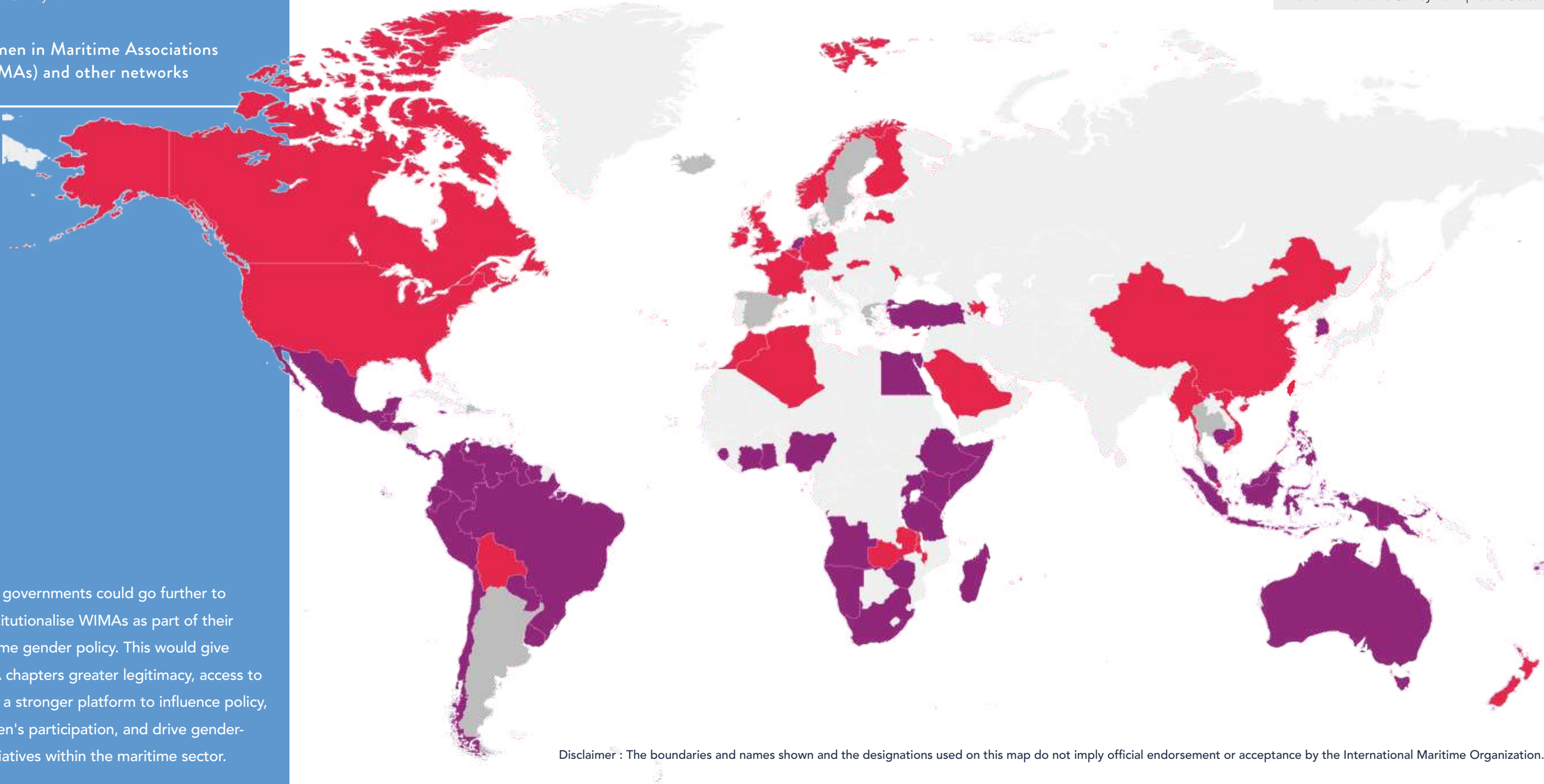
\*IMO Associate Member

06 Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs) and other networks

Member State governments could go further to support or institutionalise WIMAs as part of their national maritime gender policy. This would give national WIMA chapters greater legitimacy, access to resources, and a stronger platform to influence policy, promote women's participation, and drive gender-responsive initiatives within the maritime sector.

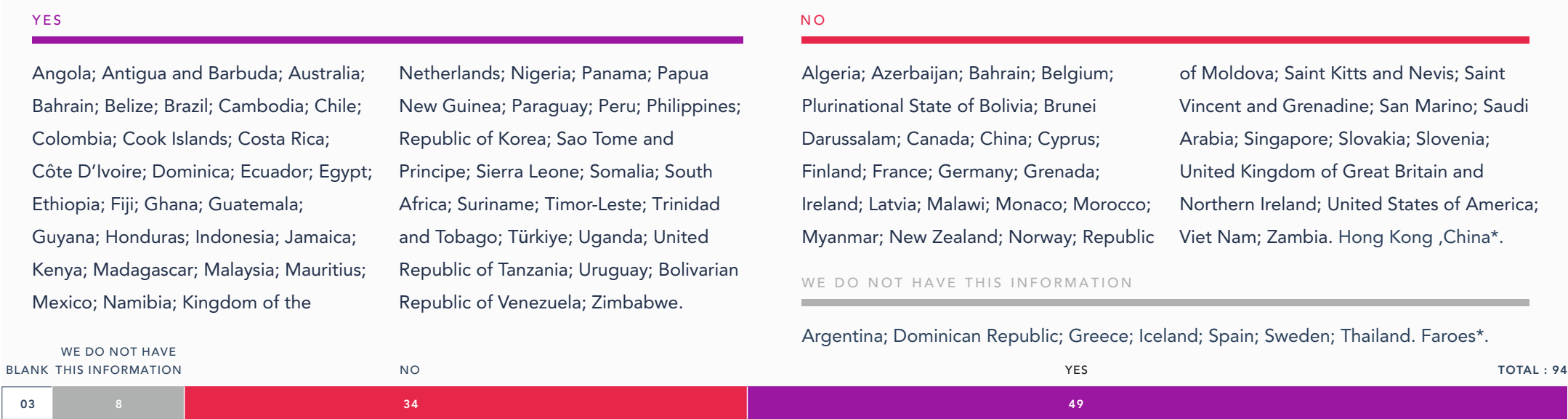
According to the latest Survey, 59 Member States have established dedicated women's networks or associations, reflecting a growing commitment to gender equality. Although 21 Member States reported having no such associations, they may have other systems in place to support women employees wishing to build their networks, while 14 provided no information.

An important and ongoing initiative within this space is the continued growth of Women in Maritime Association (WIMA) national chapters. Currently, 49 of the 59 Member States mentioned above have active WIMAs.



Disclaimer : The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Maritime Organization.

Figure 12: Has your Member State established a national chapter belonging to one of the 8 IMO Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs)



\*IMO Associate Member



06 Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs) and other networks

Encouragingly, there is strong interest in further expansion, with 34 Member States expressing an interest in establishing a WIMA national chapter in the future.

Regionally, IMO-supported WIMAs have primarily been launched in developing regions. This targeted approach reflects IMO's focus on these regions for their technical cooperation efforts. However, some developed nations, like the Republic of Korea, have recently established or are in the process of establishing their own WIMA national chapter to address gaps in public sector representation.

To ensure the continued growth and effectiveness of women's networks and WIMA national chapters, it is recommended that Member States formally recognise these initiatives and provide dedicated support and funding. This includes allocating financial resources to sustain and expand networks, as well as acknowledging the contributions of individuals who lead these efforts. By fostering an environment where such initiatives are valued and supported, Member States can contribute to the retention and advancement of female talent within the maritime industry.





# 07 Conclusion and Outlook

The Women in Maritime Survey 2024 - Member States presents a compelling picture of both progress and persistent challenges in achieving gender diversity within the maritime sector. The increased participation of Member States in the Survey, along with the expansion of data collection areas, has allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of women's representation across maritime administrations, leadership roles, workforce demographics, education, and international engagement.

Notable improvements include a rise in female representation in key maritime roles, an increase in leadership positions held by women, and a growing

presence of women's networks and associations. These positive trends underscore the efforts made by governments, industry stakeholders, and international organisations in advancing gender equality.

However, the Survey highlights areas where further work is required. Despite gains in leadership representation, women still hold a disproportionately low share of top decision-making positions and remain significantly underrepresented at the early career stage. The lack of consistent gender policies across all Member States remains a significant barrier to progress.

Furthermore, the limited participation of young women in maritime careers, particularly in specialist technical and operational roles, signals a need for enhanced outreach, education, and mentorship programmes. Policies related to work-life balance, such as parental leave, flexible working arrangements and childcare support are inconsistently implemented globally, meaning additional barriers for women in the sector.

One of the key takeaways from analysis of public sector maritime workforce data is the importance of structured and institutionalised support for gender equality initiatives. Women's networks, including WIMA national chapters, play a crucial role in advocacy and career development. Strengthening these initiatives and ensuring that skilled individuals are given access to the resources they need will be essential in sustaining their impact.

Looking ahead, several strategic actions can be taken to build on the progress observed in the 2024

Survey. The systematic collection of gender-related data is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of gender policies and pinpointing areas that demand further attention. A number of Member States were unable to fill out the IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey in 2021 and 2024 because they had not been consistently gathering data and were unable to do so in time for the deadline. IMO Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez has consistently highlighted the importance of gathering gender-disaggregated data<sup>1</sup> to secure a more inclusive future for women in the sector.

Improving policy implementation will be crucial to underpinning the ongoing advancements towards gender parity. Strengthening gender policies, providing professional development opportunities, and ensuring safe and inclusive work environments will be key in further advancing women's participation in the maritime sector. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)<sup>2</sup> is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality, the rights and the empowerment of women. The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's and girls' rights, documenting the reality of their lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Research cited in this report supports the need for continued focus on both retention and recruitment strategies, the 'Guidance on Creating Inclusive Vacancy Announcements'<sup>3</sup> is just one best practice already available from the UN to support such initiatives.

Encouraging more women to enter maritime

## Recommendations for Member States

01 Collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data



02 Strengthen implementation & accountability of gender equality policies



03 Enhance targeted retention and recruitment strategies



04 Recognise and invest in Women-focused networks



05 Support advancement of qualified women into leadership roles



# 07 Conclusion and Outlook

education and technical fields is also essential. Scholarships, targeted recruitment campaigns, and industry-academia partnerships can support this effort. Encouraging mentorship programmes and showcasing role models will help raise the profile of those leading change and ensure a robust future workforce for the maritime sector.

**Recognition and investment of Gender Focal Points and Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs) and similar networks are essential for advancing gender equality in the maritime sector**, as they serve as critical drivers of institutional change. Strengthening transparency through the systematic tracking of financial allocations related to gender and diversity will support the collection of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data in future surveys. This, in turn, will improve the quality of information available for decision-making and help guide the development of future strategic, evidence-based investments and initiatives aimed at achieving gender parity.

While the representation of women in maritime leadership has seen incremental progress, significant gaps remain. The evidence is clear: gender-diverse leadership enhances organizational performance, fosters inclusive governance, and strengthens the maritime sector's capacity to navigate complex global challenges. As highlighted by UN Women and supported by academic research<sup>4</sup>, women's participation in leadership correlates with greater investment in human capital and environmental stewardship—both critical to the sector's sustainable transformation. For instance, the UN Women report “Empowering women to conserve our oceans”<sup>5</sup> highlights how women have played leading roles in countries such as Seychelles, driving marine

conservation and sustainable ocean use. Similarly, their publication titled “The Gender Dividend: A Business Case for Gender Equality”<sup>6</sup> emphasizes that women's participation in governance is closely tied to long-term investments in people and sustainability- key drivers of the maritime industry's ongoing green and digital transitions.

To close the gender gap, targeted strategies such as leadership development programmes, mentorship schemes, and inclusive policy reform must be prioritized. While progress has been made in increasing female participation at IMO meetings, sustained, systemic action is essential. Embedding gender inclusivity into the core of maritime governance is not only a matter of equity, it is a strategic imperative for building a resilient, innovative, and sustainable maritime future.

Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>8</sup> sets a clear mandate: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Among its key targets are ending discrimination, eliminating all forms of violence against women, ensuring equal representation in leadership and decision-making, and enforcing policies that drive gender equality at every level.

Women must not only be present but actively engaged in shaping the future of maritime governance. Their full participation in decision-making is not just a matter of fairness but is a strategic imperative for a more sustainable and inclusive industry.

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# Industry Survey



01

# Introduction

The maritime industry has traditionally been male dominated, but meaningful progress is underway, with initiatives including those by IMO<sup>1</sup>, WISTA International<sup>2</sup>, the European Maritime Safety Agency<sup>3</sup>, The International Transport Workers Federation<sup>4</sup> and others creating waves of change. Women are now visible at the helm of organisations, in leadership roles across various sectors and also at sea - although not at parity with their male colleagues.

Data gathered over the course of 2024 for the industry portion of the IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey shows that women accounted for just 16% (27,992) of the total surveyed maritime workforce of 172,691 individuals. This is a decrease on the number seen in the 2021 survey, where women accounted for 29% of the maritime workforce. While the trend is downward, some of this shift may be explained by the fact that the data sets between the most recent Survey and 2021 are not an exact overlap. Only a small subset of approximately 40 companies/organisations provided data for both editions of the voluntary Survey.

Therefore, it is likely that the 2024 data does not

fully capture the total number of women employed in the private the maritime workforce. It is anticipated that the number of respondents will continue to grow in the 2027 Survey, resulting in a more comprehensive data set.

It is also of note that gender imbalance is a common issue shared across the transport sector. The 2024 EU transport in figures - Statistical pocketbook<sup>5</sup> shows that women only account for 22.7% of the EU transport sector workforce - and just 21.1% of the waterborne workforce. This figure has largely stayed static over the past few years.

## Employment opportunities

The 2024 Women in Maritime Survey, along with others, has identified where stakeholders within the maritime and wider transportation sector must make further efforts<sup>6</sup> to attract the talent needed for the maritime industry to remain competitive, while achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG 5)<sup>7</sup>. Women's representation in mid-management and specialist technical and operational roles has declined since the previous Survey, indicating that the long-term career pathway for women remains fragmented, making it difficult to retain and promote diverse talent.

At sea, the situation is particularly stark. Female seafarers still account for only a small share of the workforce, concentrated in a few key countries such as the Philippines, Greece, Argentina, Canada and the United States (see Section 5: Women at sea). This latest Survey has enhanced visibility into the seafarer workforce and highlighted the challenges women face within the industry. Systemic bias and

stereotypes often prevent women from advancing in their careers, exacerbating pay disparities and limiting career progression according to a Global Maritime Forum report on employability in maritime<sup>8</sup>. The work of various charities, like The Seafarer's Charity<sup>9</sup>, Safer Waves<sup>10</sup>, and the International Seafarers Assistance Network (ISWAN)<sup>11</sup>, along with organisations such as IMO, with its Women in Maritime programme<sup>12</sup>, have focused on providing women with training, support, visibility and recognition, thereby helping to address these gaps.

## Overcoming challenges

A range of complex and variable<sup>13</sup> factors are influencing the number of women in maritime. Scientific research by the American Journal of Industrial and Business Management<sup>14</sup> showed an "...overwhelming influence of gender stereotypes on the ability of women to progress within male-dominated sectors and the prevalence of gender-based placement within maritime roles, where women were still primarily relegated to support and junior positions, despite their dedication to their careers."

These findings, combined with entrenched cultural biases and supporting statistics, underscore the global challenges women face and the systematic barriers that continue to restrict their entry into and advancement within the maritime workforce.

The information gathered from this Survey can guide the deployment of additional resources and support, such as programmes aimed at addressing challenges in recruitment and retention, and the overall welfare of seafarers. It also identifies opportunities for organisations keen to leverage the skills that women

01 Introduction to Industry Survey analysis

contribute to the maritime workforce. Given the challenges that the sector faces, including decarbonisation, the rapid adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), widespread skills shortages, and the need for much greater supply chain resilience, recruiting the best talent, irrespective of gender, is now a strategic imperative.

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Figure 13: Sub-sector overview of surveyed companies

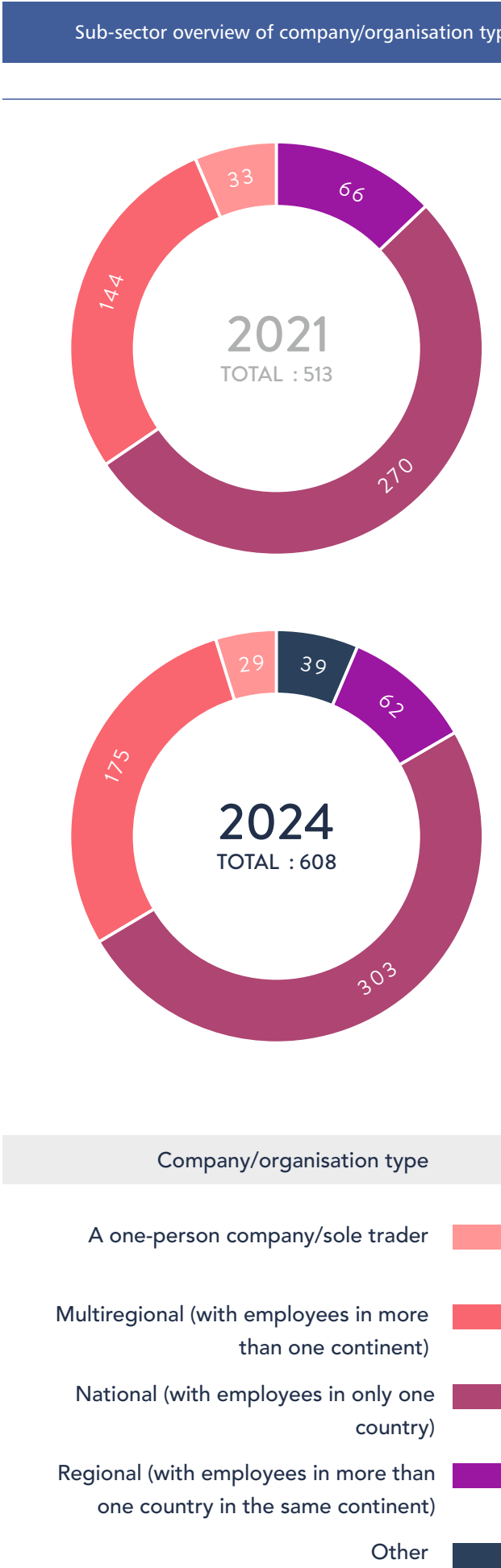


Figure 14: Sub-sector in which company/organisation operates

Sub-sector in which organisation operates	Number of organisations		Sub-sector in which organisation operates	Number of organisations	
	2021	2024		2021	2024
Advertising, marketing, public relations	8	7	Maritime education and training institutions/Maritime universities/Seafarer academies/Research institutes	30	40
Bunkering	7	7	Maritime technology	5	11
Classification societies	7	6	Medical services	0	2
Consultants/Surveyors	28	26	NVOCC/Box operator	2	4
Crewing agencies and crew training services	7	14	Offshore	11	6
Cruise industry	1	7	Other	17	79
Cyber protection systems and services	1	1	Port operations & services	36	66
Environmental technologies	1	4	Recruitment (shore based)	1	2
ESG and decarbonization services	0	2	Security & safety	6	6
Financial institution/Bank	0	1	Ship agents	26	24
Fishing industry	2	-	Ship and crew management	50	53
Freight forwarding	16	24	Ship brokers and charterers	25	18
Fuels & lubricants	3	2	Ship registries	4	4
Government/Regulatory/Law enforcement	21	10	Shipowners	61	60
IT hardware, software and/or electronic equipment (incl. programming and AI)	2	1	Suppliers of equipment and services	14	14
Legal	15	33	Telecommunications, information and data systems	1	2
Marine engineering/Ship repair/Shipyards	17	6	Towage/Salvage/Dredging	10	6
Marine insurance and P&I	25	15	Weather intelligence services	0	1
Maritime associations/Organisations/NGOs	53	44			

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Figure 15: Geographical spread of responding organisations in the private sector, by headquarter location



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- 📍 Increase in number of responding organisations from 2021 to 2024
- 📍 Decrease in number of responding organisations from 2021 to 2024
- 📍 Same number of responding organisations in 2021 and 2024/Partial information available

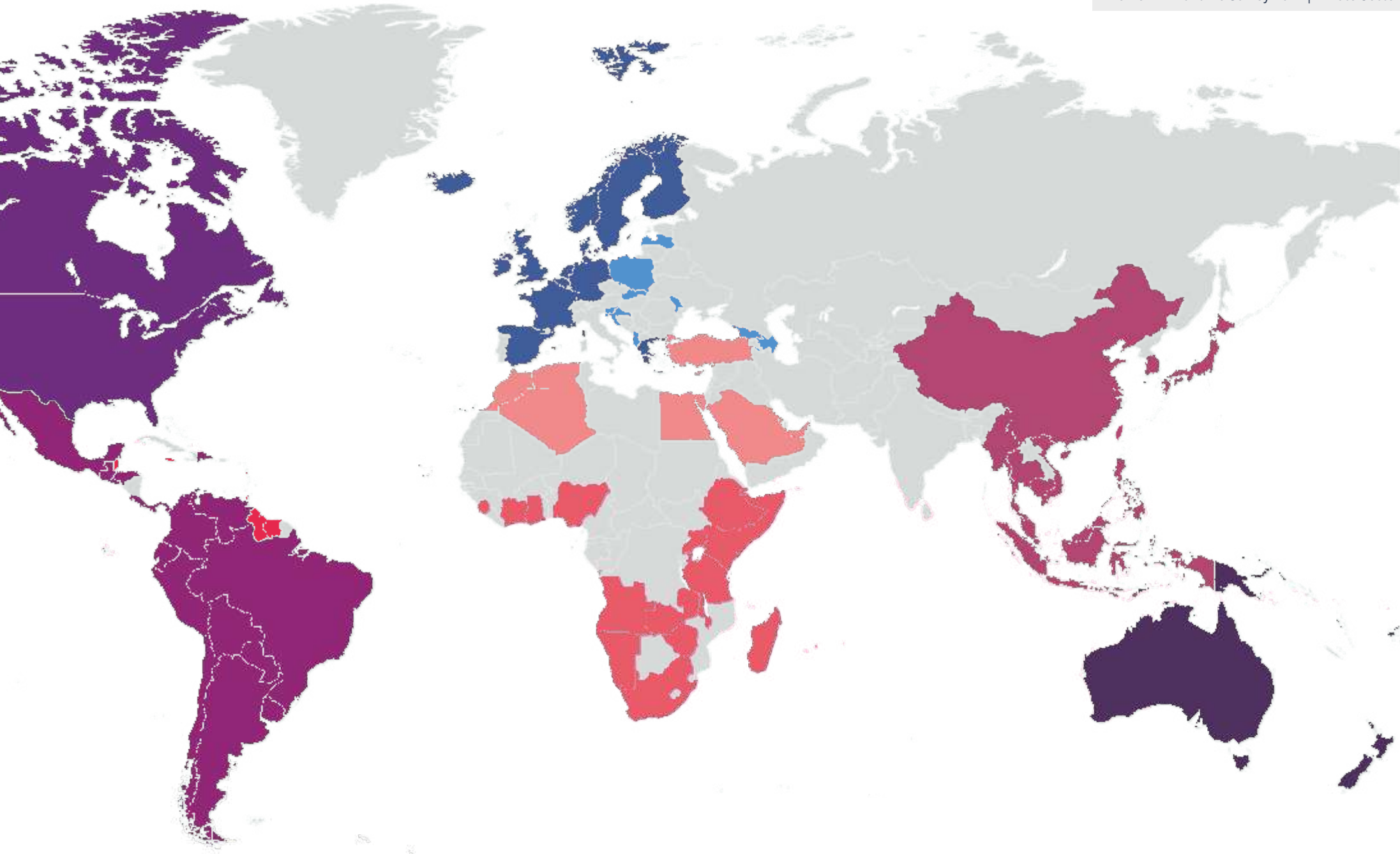


Figure 16  
Regional focus:  
Women in the private sector  
workforce

(Number and percentage share of women in the maritime private sector, by region)

\*Data reflects only the responses of private sector organisations that participated in the 2024 Survey and may not fully represent the entire region.

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Region	Total number of employees in the private maritime sector (men + women)*	Total number of women employed in the private maritime sector	Percentage of women employed in the private maritime sector
Africa	9,151	923	10.09%
Arab states and Mediterranean region	22,220	1,062	4.78%
Asia	34,755	5,748	16.54%
Caribbean	311	197	63.34%
Eastern Europe	139	66	47.48%
Europe	71,402	15,411	21.58%
Latin America	15,404	2,989	19.40%
North America	18,108	1,191	6.58%
Pacific	1,201	405	33.72%
Grand Total	172,691	27,992	16.21%



02

# Women across the maritime industry

The representation of women in the maritime industry continues to evolve, reflecting broader trends in diversity and inclusion across the sector. A total of 172,691 employees work across the 608 companies in the maritime private sector that participated in the most recent Survey. When excluding seafarers, the data indicates that 27,992 of total employees are women, equating to an overall female workforce share of 16%. This share of the workforce is notably lower than the 29% reported in 2021, where women accounted for 107,023 out of a total of 367,858 employees.



## 02 Women across the maritime industry

While some variation is to be expected given changes to the workforce over a three year period, as well as a different set of respondents from the original Survey, the picture that the new data paints is cause for concern. At less than a quarter of the surveyed workforce, this number indicates the urgent need for action to increase the recruitment and retention of women across the sector, although certain segments have reported improvements in gender balance.

### Gains and setbacks

Sub-sectors that have demonstrated positive progress in increasing female representation include advertising, marketing, public relations (increased to 60% from 54%), crewing agencies (increased to 60% from 55%) and ship agents (increased to 43% from 40%). The steady rise in these sectors suggests a growing trend of women entering the maritime industry. The presence of such skills within other sectors provides a pipeline of opportunities to attract more women to maritime.

Conversely, several sub-sectors have experienced a reduction in the proportion of women employees. These include bunkering (which declined to 6% from 10% in 2021) and legal services (which declined to 23% from 49% in 2021). While differences in data are expected, given that only 40 companies/ organisations participated in both the 2021 and 2024 Surveys, the most recent numbers are extremely low in their own right, signalling the need for intervention.

The downward trend raises further concerns about the potential barriers to entry and retention for women in these sectors, and underscores the

requirement for targeted policies and initiatives to address gender disparities.

### Emerging sectors

The 2024 Survey introduced new sub-sectors that provide insight into emerging opportunities for maritime workers. While respondent numbers in these sectors are towards the lower end, as these sectors grow, we anticipate greater data collection.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and decarbonisation services reported a high share of female employees at 67%, reflecting the growing intersection of sustainability and maritime operations. Similarly, financial institutions/banks reported 43% female representation, while medical services and weather intelligence services recorded 61% and 46%, respectively.

The World Maritime University's (WMU) *Future of Work*<sup>1</sup> programme points out that "new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, and digitalisation of the economy, along with changes in socio-political patterns and climate change, are shifting the nature of work." This suggests that emerging specialised fields within the industry may shift priorities and create new opportunities that are more accessible to women than traditionally male-dominated areas, while also highlighting the need for corresponding changes in education and training.

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# Mid-management, core, and support roles

## Women in mid-management

When it comes to mid-management roles in surveyed companies and organisations, women occupy 20% of jobs, equating to 3,528 employees out of a total 17,639. However, this figure masks notable fluctuations across sub-sectors. Among the 32 comparable sub-sectors, 17 have experienced a decline in the overall share of women in mid-management roles. The most significant drops were recorded in bunkering (fell to 7% in 2024 from 42% in 2021), the cruise industry (declined to 18% in 2024 from 50% in 2021), and IT hardware, software, and electronic equipment (decreased to 20% in 2024 from 50% in 2021).

Conversely, 15 sub-sectors have seen an increase of women in mid-management roles. For the purposes of this report, this section has focused on sub-sectors where there is meaningful comparison of data between 2024 and 2021. Notable examples include crewing agencies and crew training (which increased to 57% in 2024 from 35% in 2021), offshore (which increased to 28% from 9% in 2021) and maritime education and training institutions (which increased to 57% from 40%). While some

Figure 18: Percentage of women employees in private sub-sectors across 2021 and 2024





03 Mid-management, core, and support roles

sectors such as cyber security, non-vessel operating common carriers/box carriers and ESG and decarbonisation services are part of the 15 that demonstrated improvement, the low number of respondents from these sectors means that they could be outliers.

The introduction of new sub-sectors in 2024, including ESG and decarbonisation services, financial institutions, medical services, and weather intelligence, has diversified the industry landscape, creating opportunities for newcomers into the sector. That said, given that men make up 80% of mid-management roles, there are clear challenges to achieving gender parity goals.

Women in core roles

Specialist technical and operational roles (core) have seen a similar distribution, with 20% of these positions held by women, or 10,246 employees out of a total of 51,230. This overall share of women in specialist technical and operational roles has dropped to 20% from 28% in 2021.

Among the 32 comparable sub-sectors, 20 reported declines in female representation. The most substantial decreases were observed in marine insurance and protection and indemnity (P&I) (which decreased to 9% in 2024 from 70% in 2021) and legal (which fell to 19% from 47% in 2021). Some of these drops in numbers could be accounted for by a greater number of companies in individual sub-sectors providing accurate workforce data, thereby correcting the picture painted by the 2021 data. However, the low percentages are a clear indicator that these sub-sectors are struggling to either recruit or retain women workers.

Figure 18: Percentage of women employees in private sub-sectors across 2021 and 2024 (contd.)





A total of 13 sub-sectors showed an increase in female participation, including ship and crew management, which rose to 34% from 11% in 2021; and maritime technology, which increased to 21% from 3%. Although based on a small sample size, environmental technologies reported a rise to 84% from 0% in 2021, while telecommunications, information and data systems reported an increase to 41% from 3% in 2021.

Women in support roles

Studies have shown a persistent trend of women being concentrated in support roles<sup>1</sup> and facing significant barriers to advancing into leadership positions, indicating a ‘broken rung’ in the career ladder, which research has shown can particularly impact<sup>2</sup> women of colour.

Women continue to have the highest representation in support roles within maritime organisations, holding 30% of these positions. This equates to around 9,208 employees out of a total of 30,693. However, this figure represents a decrease of 18% when compared to 2021. Of the 32 comparable sub-sectors, 21 saw a decline in female representation in support roles, with the steepest declines located in the cruise industry (which dropped to 37% in 2024 from 100% in 2021) and marine insurance and P&I (which fell to 27% in 2024 from 83% in 2021). Conversely, 15 sub-sectors witnessed increases, with the most notable improvements in IT hardware, software and/or electronic equipment (rose to 50% from 0% in 2021), and maritime technology (increased to 40% from 15% in 2021).

It is important to note that the distinction between core and support roles does not necessarily reflect

the seniority of these positions, but rather highlights their traditional gender distributions - for example the executive assistant to the CEO would still be classed as a support role, despite holding a senior position within the organisational structure.

While women hold a notable presence in support roles, their underrepresentation in mid-management and core roles highlights ongoing structural challenges within the maritime sector. Research from The Global Maritime Forum<sup>3</sup> in 2024 found that systemic bias and stereotypes continue to confine women to support positions, limiting career progression. The new findings, unfortunately, reinforce that picture. The overall decline in female representation across these roles underscores the need for increased efforts to attract, retain, and promote women in the industry.

As the industry evolves, particularly with the introduction of new sub-sectors, it is crucial to implement strategies that foster a more inclusive workforce, ensuring that women have equal opportunities in both leadership and technical roles.

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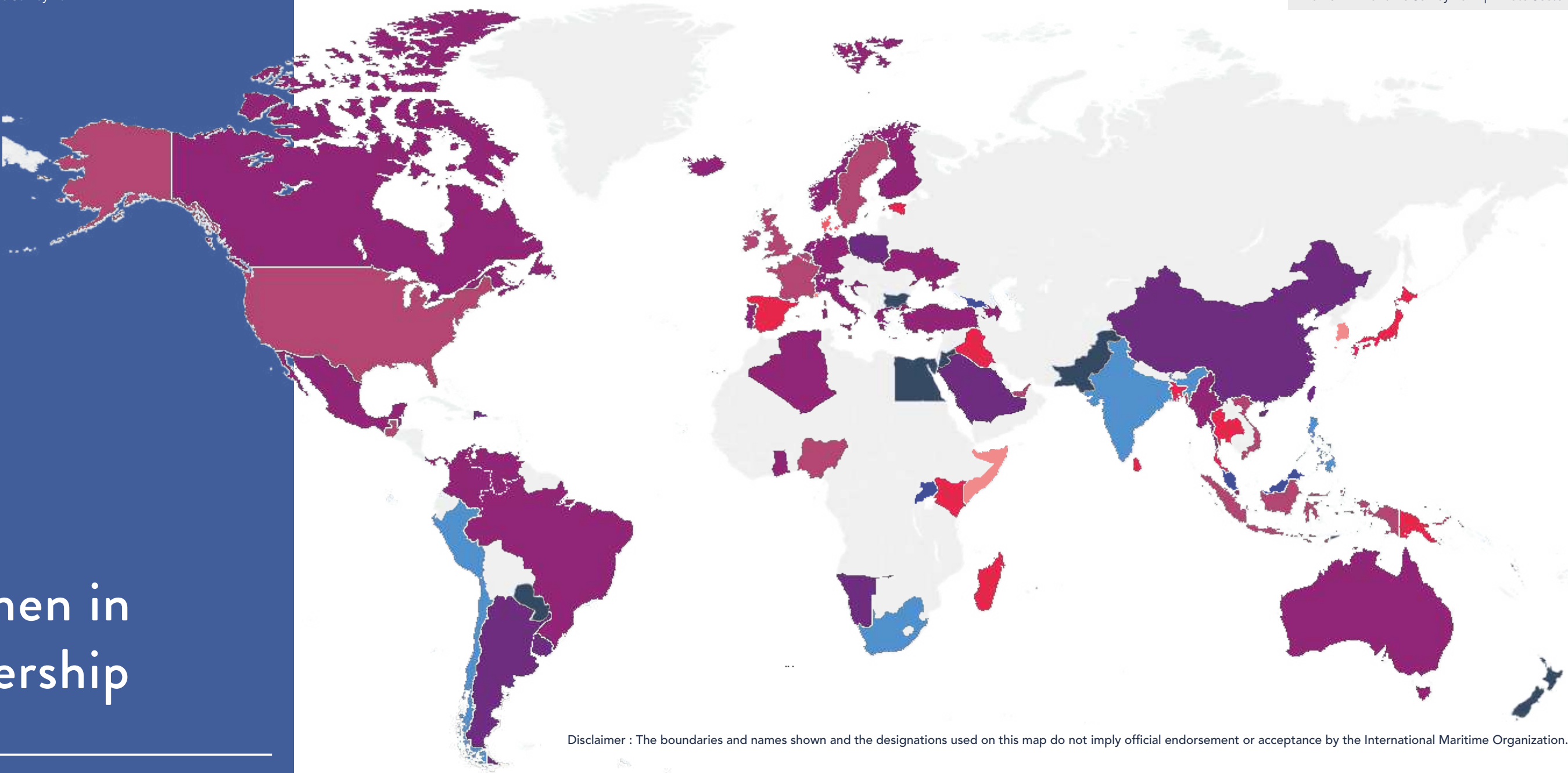


04

# Women in leadership

The representation of women in senior leadership positions within the maritime industry is a critical measure of gender equality and progress. The latest Survey data reflects both advancements and challenges in increasing female representation at the board and executive levels. Overcoming the barriers to women's access to leadership roles will require dedicated efforts and a significant investment of resources.

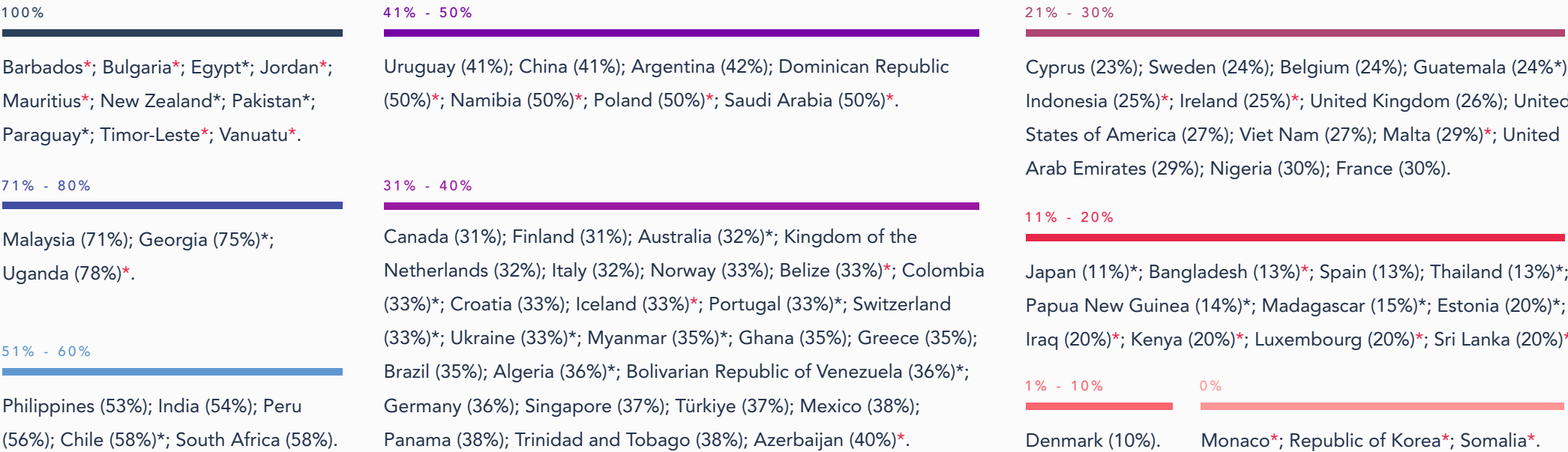
There have been a number of leadership programmes aimed at women in various industries, with some specifically aimed at the maritime sector. A recent offering is the inaugural 'Maritime Women's



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Figure 19: Share of women on boards by country of company/organisation headquarters

The data received contained (\*) less than 5 respondents / (\*) just 1 respondent





04 Women in leadership

Leadership and Empowerment<sup>1</sup>’ training course offered by the IMO and WISTA International, along with the World Maritime University (WMU). Launched in 2025, the course is designed to promote gender equity, by addressing existing barriers and equipping participants with advanced strategic management skills. It aims to foster confidence, self-awareness and professional growth, while promoting knowledge-sharing, networking and collaboration among women in the industry.

Women on boards

A total of 1,206 women sit on the boards of surveyed maritime organisations, accounting for 34% of board members. Nevertheless, several sub-sectors have experienced considerable declines in female representation. These include bunkering (which decreased to 9% in 2024 from 33% in 2021), IT hardware/software and/or electronic equipment (which dropped to 0% in 2024 from 20% in 2021), and marine engineering/ship repair/shipyards (which fell to 14% in 2024 from 35% in 2021).

Sub-sectors with substantial increases in female board representation are being led by advertising, marketing, and public relations (which rose to 63% from 29% in 2021), port operations & services (which increased to 53% from 21% in 2021) and ship brokers & charterers (which reported a rise to 47% from 18% in 2021).

Geographically, representation varies widely. Countries with the lowest share of women on boards (less than 20%) include Denmark and Spain, among others. Countries in the 41-60% range include China, South Africa, and the Philippines, while nations such as Malaysia fall within the 61-80%

Figure 20: Share and distribution of women on boards of maritime organisations in the private sector



04 Women in leadership

category. A few countries, such as Bulgaria, Egypt, Jordan, and New Zealand, reported exceptionally high representation (81-100%), though each had fewer than five respondents, which may limit the reliability of these figures.

Women in C-level positions

At the C-suite level, the maritime industry continues to reflect traditional gender disparities, though some sub-sectors are leading the way in fostering female leadership. The top five sub-sectors with the highest share of women in C-level positions include maritime associations/organisations/NGOs, ship and crew management, shipowners, port operations & services, and legal services.

It is important to note that inconsistencies in data collection may impact these findings, as some organisations only reported on seafarers, thereby overlooking shore-based female professionals, particularly those in inland food processing roles within the fishing sector and the weather intelligence sector, which were not represented by Survey respondents. This discrepancy underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach to tracking gender representation at senior levels across the industry. Additionally, while companies and organisations employing women and having female board members demonstrate a strong correlation with gender equality policies, further efforts are needed to sustain and expand women's pathways into senior leadership roles.

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Figure 21: Organisations per sub-sector with women in C-suite roles












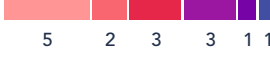










### Sub-sectors with the most women in C-suite roles: 2021

- ### Sub-sectors with the most women in C-suite roles: 2024

1. Port operations and services
2. Shipowners
3. Ship and crew management
4. Maritime associations/Organisations/NGOs
5. Maritime education & training institutions/  
Maritime universities/Seafarer academies/  
Research institutes

Women in Maritime Survey 2024 | Private Sector

Sub-sector	Total women in C-level roles		Distribution of roles
	2021	2024	
Maritime education & training institutions/Maritime universities/Seafarer academies/Research institutes	47	38	
Maritime technology	9	11	
Medical services	0	2	
NVOCC/Box operator	2	4	
Offshore	13	3	
Other	113	72	
Port operations & services	46	61	
Recruitment (shore based)	1	2	
Security & safety	5	5	
Ship agents	43	23	
Ship and crew management	51	50	
Ship brokers and charterers	34	17	
Ship registries	7	4	
Shipowners	87	59	
Suppliers of equipment and services	18	14	
Telecommunications, information and data systems	1	2	
Towage/Salvage/Dredging	22	5	
Weather intelligence services	0	1	

05

# Recruitment and retention in maritime companies

Although the latest data shows that the maritime industry has made measurable strides in advancing gender equality in certain sectors and sub-sectors, women remain underrepresented in key operational and leadership roles, highlighting persistent barriers that require further attention and strategic intervention.

The majority of surveyed companies and organisations have their largest representations of women in the age group between 35 and 44 years of age - which indicates experienced workers. However, less than 3% are in the 18 - 24 age range, indicating there is still an ongoing challenge in attracting young women to maritime careers.

Figure 22: Number of organisations employing women by age group and sub-sector



05 Recruitment and retention in maritime companies

Gender-focused policies

Recruitment policies have evolved, with more companies taking steps to address gender gaps, and implementing gender-inclusive practices and formal policies that promote gender equality. Of the 608 Survey respondents, 498 provided details on gender equality policies within their organisations. Within the 498:

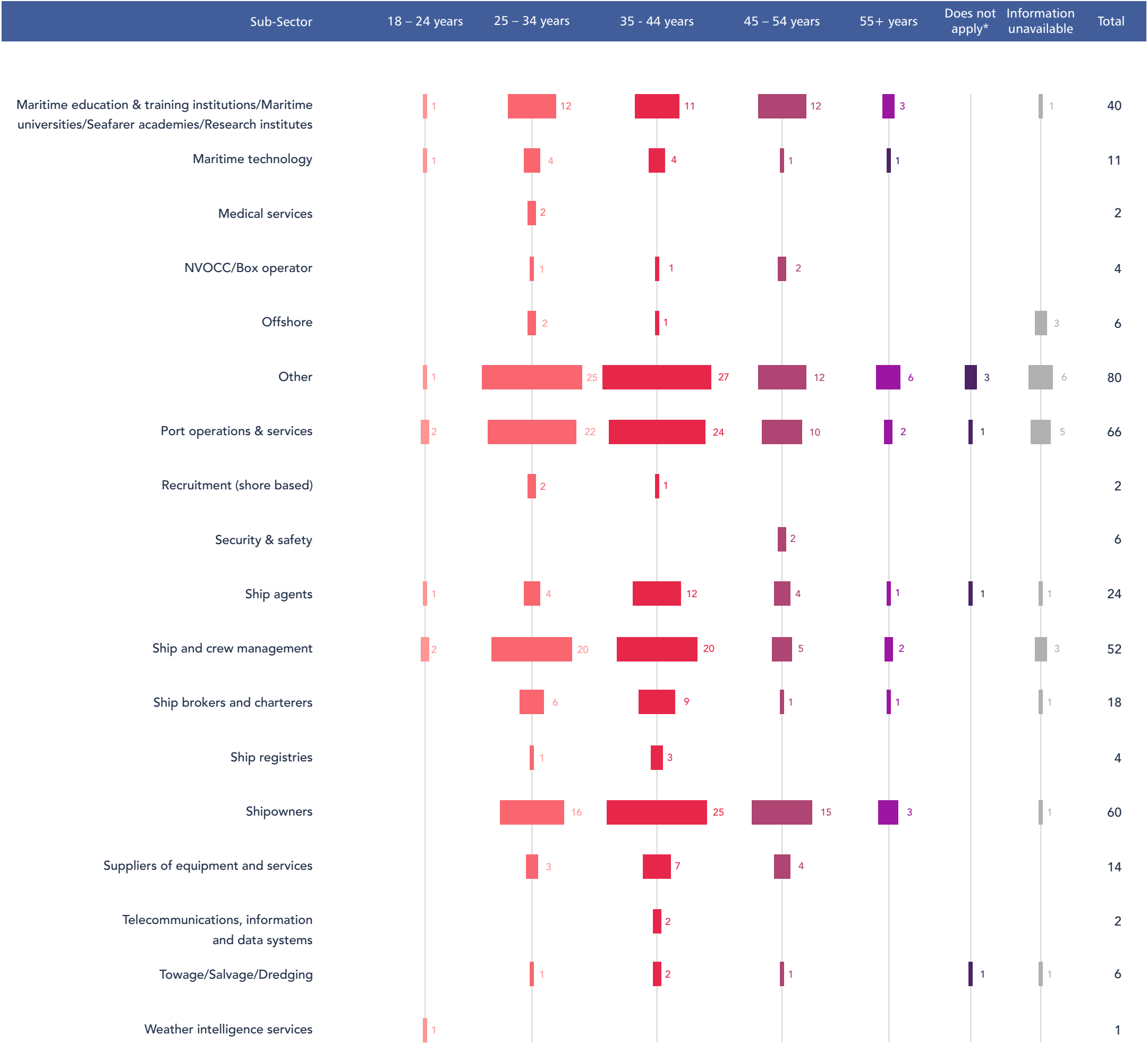
- 248 organisations offer flexible working arrangements.
- 190 provide paid parental leave.
- 91 organisations conduct gender diversity training programmes.
- 228 have sexual harassment policies in place.

Some 235 respondents also confirmed efforts to ensure pay equality, demonstrating a growing commitment to equitable compensation. The most widely adopted measures include the use of neutral and inclusive language in job descriptions, involving diverse teams in interview processes, and implementing anonymous job applications.

Gender quotas, bias training, and measurable diversity targets have also seen increased adoption. However, 157 respondents indicated their companies lack formal policies on gender equality in recruitment and promotion, highlighting an area for improvement. Furthermore, only 11% reported having measurable diversity targets, suggesting there may be a hesitancy to adopt more structured approaches - possibly because of *divided opinions around quotas*<sup>1</sup>.

Respondents from 53 companies and organisations reported offering mentorship schemes - a positive trend for the sector overall. Effective mentorship

Figure 22: Number of organisations employing women by age group and sub-sector (contd.)



05 Recruitment and retention in maritime companies

programmes have proven instrumental in advancing women's careers in transportation by facilitating knowledge exchange, providing role models, and fostering professional networks. Several WISTA chapters deliver maritime-specific mentoring initiatives to support women in the sector, while programmes such as Australia’s *Women in Transport (WiT) Mentoring Program*<sup>2</sup>- aimed at women, non-binary, and gender-diverse individuals in Victoria’s transport industry - serve as leading examples of broader efforts to foster inclusion across transportation fields.

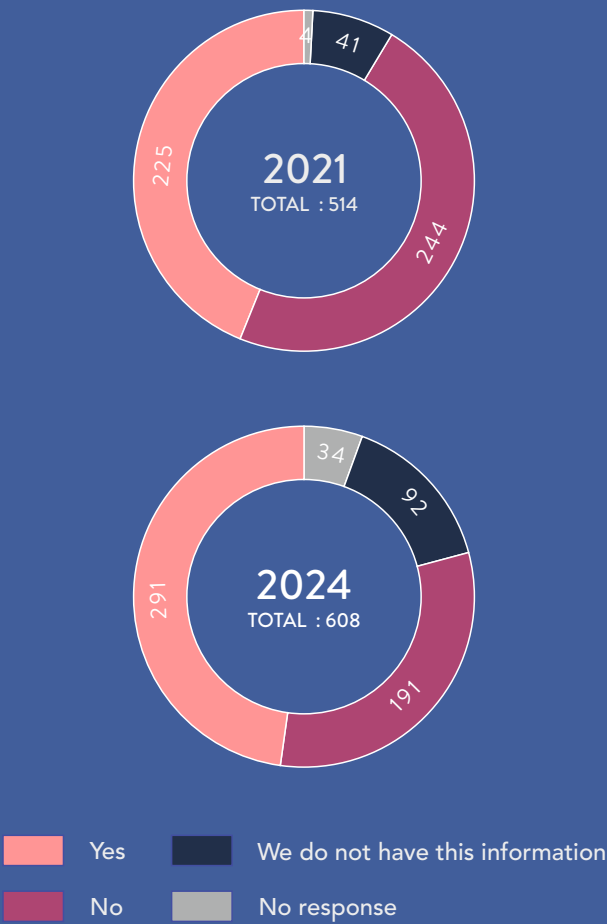
Recruiting Women Leaders

While representation in mid-management and core roles have seen fluctuations, women remain significantly underrepresented in board-level positions. A strong correlation exists between companies with female board representation and those with established gender equality initiatives.

Women’s presence at the decision-making level is a key indicator of progress<sup>3</sup> in gender equality. Among the maritime companies responding to the Survey, 80% reported having at least one female board member. The data submitted shows that organisations with female board representation were also more likely to have structured policies supporting gender equality.

While progress has been made, challenges persist, particularly in increasing women's representation in core roles. The industry is encouraged to track investments in gender equality initiatives and increase data collection to further refine strategies for fostering an inclusive maritime workforce.

Figure 23  
Does your company/organisation have a formal policy that promotes gender equality?



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Figure 24: Gender equality in recruitment and promotion processes

Recruitment policies		Organisations implementing these policies	
		Number	Percentage
	Use neutral language in job descriptions	183	30.10%
	Ensure pay equality	235	38.65%
	Involve a diverse team of people in the interview process	143	23.52%
	Provide organisational training around bias	80	13.16%
	Have specific quantitative measures for increasing diversity	67	11.02%
	Anonymous job applications	33	5.43%
	I don't know	60	9.87%
	Use of gender quotas	15	2.47%
	There is no policy for gender equality in recruitment and promotion processes	157	25.82%

Other gender equality policies		Organisations implementing these policies	
		Number	Percentage
	Paid parental leave	190	31.25%
	Time away for breastfeeding/bottle feeding	109	17.93%
	Childcare facilities	34	5.59%
	Breastfeeding spaces	60	9.87%
	Gender/Diversity training	91	14.97%
	Flexible working arrangements	248	40.79%
	Mentorship schemes	53	8.72%
	Sexual harassment policy	228	37.50%
	Designated gender/diversity focal point	35	5.76%
	Gender sensitisation campaign	51	8.39%
	We do not have this information	44	7.24%
	Other	14	2.30%
	No other policies/initiatives	168	27.63%



# 06 Women at Sea

The maritime sector continues to be overwhelmingly male-dominated, with women representing just 1% of the active seafaring workforce according to data from surveyed organisations that directly hire seafarers. Out of 211,750 seafarers employed by the 179 organisations that responded to this section of the questionnaire, only 2,223 were women. This stark imbalance highlights the persistent gender disparity within the industry. By rank, 22% of women seafarers hold non-officer ratings, closely followed by second officer at 21% and deck cadets at 15%.

Barriers to entry for women in onboard roles within the maritime sector remain evident. Notably, one company explicitly stated in the free-text section of the Survey: "We do not hire women in offshore support vessels." This statement highlights the persistence of discriminatory hiring practices in parts of the industry, which continue to limit opportunities

for women seafarers. Survey data further underscores the disparities in female seafarer employment by country.

The highest concentrations of reported seafarers were present in the Philippines (35%), Viet Nam (7%) and India (7%). Among women seafarers specifically, the highest representation came from the Philippines (23%) and Greece (10%).

A total of 179 organisations surveyed responded 'yes' to operating vessels, with the majority operating bulk carriers (31%), oil tankers (14%), special purpose (12%) and general cargo ships (8%). Of these 179 organisations, 85 actively employ female seafarers on the following types of ships: oil tankers (25%), passenger ships (23%), general cargo (19%) and bulk carriers and special purpose (13% each). The second largest group of women seafarers were employed/served on bulk carriers (26%), oil tankers (22%), general cargo (19%), passenger ships (18%) and special purpose (15%).

### Future seafarer demand

Maritime is facing a critical skills shortage, with several reports highlighting the widening gap in workforce and skills. The [Maritime Just Transition Taskforce](#)<sup>1</sup>, an initiative led by the United Nations Global Compact, with the collaboration of IMO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), has created a roadmap towards the maritime skills needed for a just and green transition.

This work is vital to the ongoing IMO efforts aimed at preparing the future maritime workforce for a





06 Women at Sea

changing world. Between 300,000 and 750,000 seafarers<sup>2</sup> will require additional training in alternative fuels and new engines by 2050.

Challenging environment

In November 2024, the Global Maritime Forum - All Aboard Alliance ‘Employability in maritime’<sup>3</sup> report highlighted the significant challenges women face in the industry. It found that 29% of women identified gender discrimination as a major barrier to career progression. Transitions to shore-based roles were also reported as particularly challenging, with additional difficulties, compounded by discrimination and family responsibilities. The data submitted through the industry questionnaire of the Women in Maritime Survey echoes these findings, reinforcing the urgent need to remove barriers that hinder women from entering and remaining in the sector. Despite this, only 13% of respondents, unchanged from 2021, are providing training around bias. Similarly, the proposition of companies and

Figure 25: Share of female seafarers by country of company/organisation headquarters



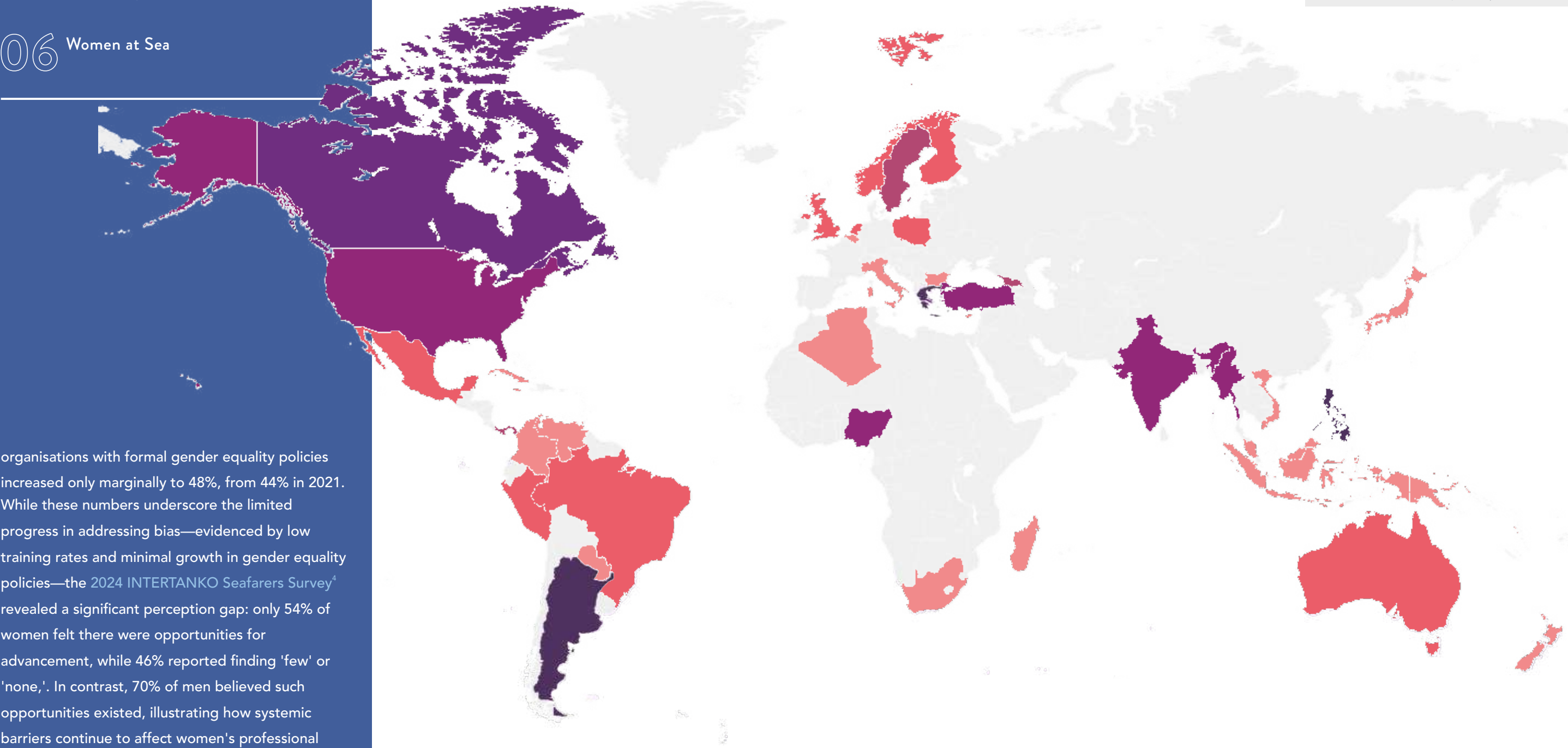
- Number of organisations with increase in share of female seafarers from 2021 to 2024
- Number of organisations with decrease in share of female seafarers from 2021 to 2024
- Number of organisations with same share of female seafarers in 2021 and 2024/Partial information available

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The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Maritime Organization.

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organisations with formal gender equality policies increased only marginally to 48%, from 44% in 2021. While these numbers underscore the limited progress in addressing bias—evidenced by low training rates and minimal growth in gender equality policies—the 2024 INTERTANKO Seafarers Survey<sup>4</sup> revealed a significant perception gap: only 54% of women felt there were opportunities for advancement, while 46% reported finding 'few' or 'none,'. In contrast, 70% of men believed such opportunities existed, illustrating how systemic barriers continue to affect women's professional growth in the sector.

While not specific to women at sea, the findings from the Q4 2024 Seafarer Happiness Index<sup>5</sup> also demonstrated a drop in overall happiness levels, with seafarers reporting challenges, including a lack of a healthy work-life balance, systemic isolation, lack of reliable access to shore leave, intensified workloads (particularly during port calls), stagnant wages and hidden costs. These factors contribute to a challenging working environment for many individuals - an environment made even more difficult for women seafarers due to gender-specific issues such as lack of access to properly



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Figure 26: Geographical spread: Which country does your private sector organisation source your largest group of women seafarers from?

TOP COUNTRIES MENTIONED		5 SURVEY MENTIONS	3 SURVEY MENTIONS	1 SURVEY MENTION
Philippines	27	Canada.	Georgia; Panama; Sweden.	Algeria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Colombia; Cuba;
Greece	12	4 SURVEY MENTIONS	2 SURVEY MENTIONS	Cyprus; Indonesia; Italy; Jamaica; Japan,
Argentina	06	India; Myanmar; Nigeria; Türkiye; United States of America.	Australia; Brazil; Finland; Mexico; Kingdom of the Netherlands; Norway; Peru; Poland; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.	Madagascar; Malaysia; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; South Africa; Trinidad and Tobago; Vanuatu; Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; Viet Nam.

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fitting PPE<sup>6</sup>, sexual harassment<sup>7</sup>, professional marginalisation<sup>8</sup> and other forms of discrimination.

Despite slow progress, the findings across this Survey and others referenced in the industry emphasise the need for continued efforts to increase female representation, improve workplace conditions, and challenge discriminatory hiring practices within the maritime sector. Breaking down such barriers is essential and would contribute to the sector's long-term success.

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Figure 27: Rank distribution of women seafarers across surveyed organisations





07

# Privately run maritime educational institutes

The maritime industry has seen a modest increase in female participation in privately run maritime education and training institutions, maritime universities, seafarer academies, and research institutes. A total of 76 respondents participating in the Industry Survey identified their main activity as

maritime education and training, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of structured training programmes and research-led maritime advancements.

Among these institutions, the representation of women in faculty positions varies across senior and junior roles. Of the 1,519 senior faculty members (such as full professors, associate professors, and senior lecturers), 582 were women (38%). Similarly, among the 921 junior faculty members (including lecturers and part-time lecturers), 299 were women (32%). While these figures indicate progress, they also highlight the continued need for greater gender balance in maritime-related academia.

### Training seafarers

The reported number of students pursuing seafaring courses totalled 84,388, of which only 3,830 were women, representing just 5% of the total. However, there was a slightly higher proportion of women (756) among the 8,709 students who completed a 12-month onboard training period. This suggests that while female participation remains low overall, those who do enrol are demonstrating persistence in completing key maritime training requirements.

Infrastructure also plays a crucial role in fostering an inclusive training environment. Only nine institutions reported having a training ship for seafarer education, with vessel types ranging from LNG carriers and general cargo ships to the use of a National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) in cooperation with the United States Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the Department of Transportation (DOT). Six of these institutions confirmed they had suitable facilities for women.

However, among the 2024 Survey respondents operating ships with actively employed female seafarers, only 28% offered designated women's changing rooms/bathrooms onboard. It is possible that women seafarers are securing cadet training berths on merchant ships and are thus able to gain experience outside the use of training vessels.

### Wider training

Beyond seafaring courses, private maritime education institutions also cater to non-seafaring maritime professionals. In 2023, 5,970 students of the institutes surveyed were enrolled in non-seagoing nautical or maritime-related degrees, such as logistics, law, and economics, with women comprising 1,655 of this group, or 28%. Meanwhile, STEM degrees, including naval architecture, attracted 1,609 students, of whom 297 were women, representing 19%. A total of 10 responding institutions (13%) reported that they do not offer STEM degrees, and 49 institutions (64%) did not respond regarding STEM participation.

To further increase female representation in maritime education, organisations can harness tools such as targeted recruitment initiatives, as well as bridge and mentorship programmes. Greater investment in gender equality training, infrastructure improvements, and digital learning methods could also enhance accessibility and support diversity efforts. Collaboration between maritime universities, industry bodies, and regulatory authorities will allow for a holistic approach that can shape a more inclusive and competitive maritime workforce for the future.

Figure 28: Faculty professionals in maritime academy/maritime department of university

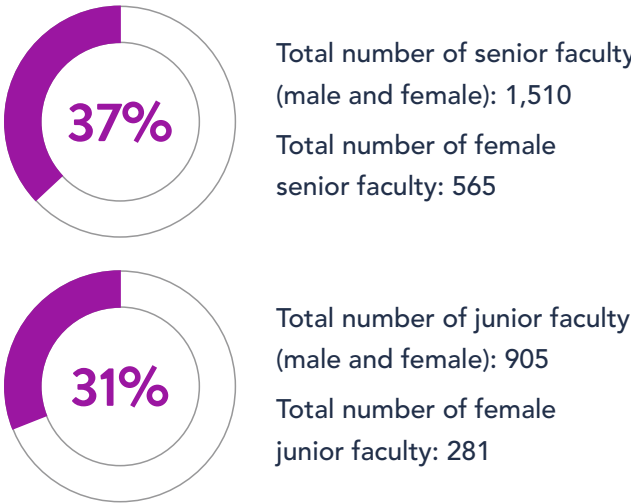


Figure 29: Educational, research or training institutes providing courses for seafarers

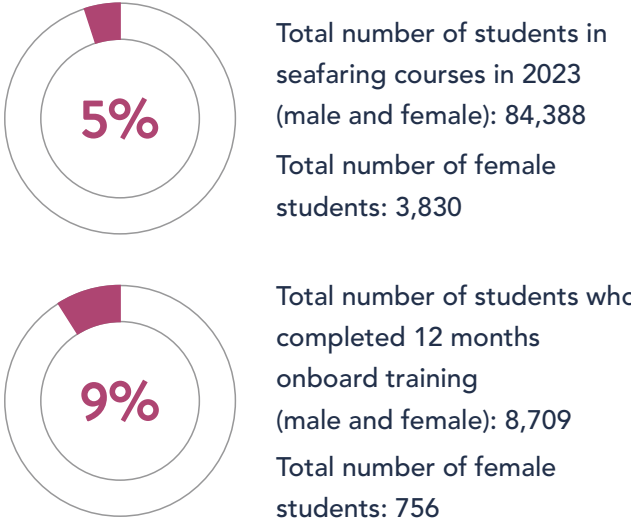


Figure 30: Wider training of students

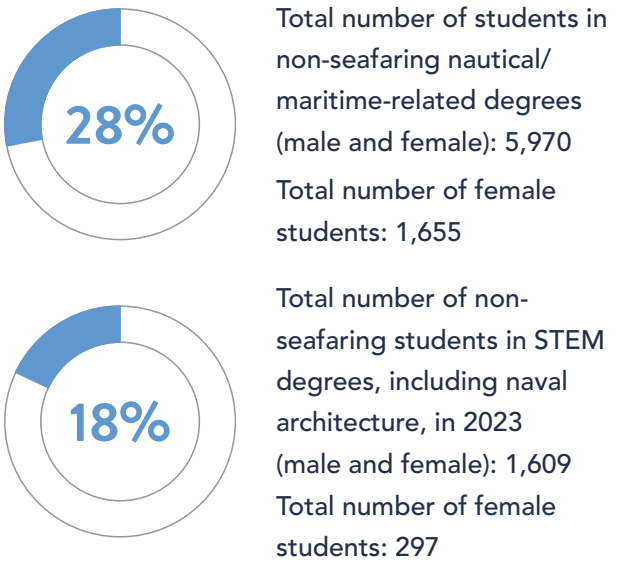
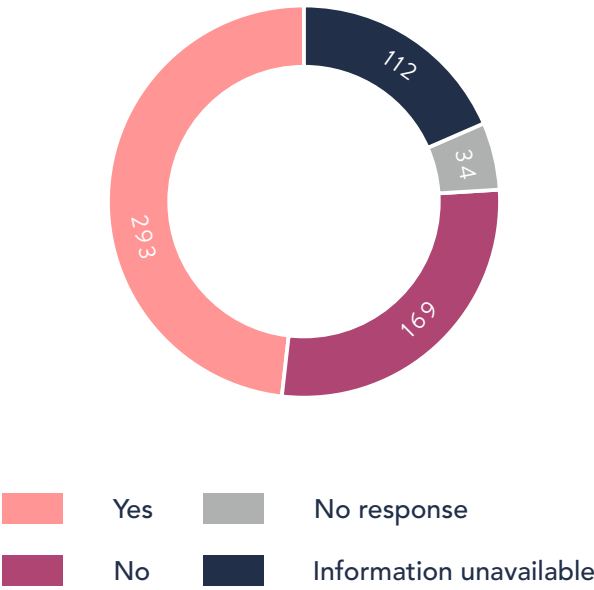


Figure 31:  
Are the employees in your company/organisation registered in any networks/associations for women employed in the maritime, port or fishing sectors?



# 08 Maritime Networks and Associations

The importance of networking in the maritime industry cannot be overstated given the geographical spread of our global workforce. Maritime networks and associations provide platforms for collaboration, advocacy, and professional development, enabling women to access opportunities and overcome barriers traditionally faced in the sector. In 2023, the IMO chose the theme of ‘Mobilizing networks for gender equality’ for its celebration of the International Day for Women in Maritime, with then Secretary-General Kitack Lim stating: “The theme for this year highlights the importance of collaboration and networking in achieving gender equality in the maritime sector. The IMO-established Women in

Maritime Associations (WIMAs) are one example of such networks. They are paving the way in supporting women in maritime across the globe – and encouraging the next generation into the maritime industry.”

In addition to being able to join IMO Member State recognised WIMAs, women- and male allies- are able to join one of WISTA's 62 national chapters, the first of which was established in 1974.

The 2024 Women in Maritime Survey data reveals that 48% of responding companies and organisations have employees involved in industry networks or associations. These platforms help address key issues in the sector and work towards overcoming the institutional barriers and cultural stigma that women face in the maritime industry. Of the 293 respondents with employees registered in networks across the maritime, port, logistics, and fishing sectors, 217 reported that their employees were members of WISTA. Additionally, 15 of the 293 responding companies stated that their employees were a part of one of the IMO WIMAs.

As these women-focused associations expand their influence across new regions and sectors, their role in shaping a more inclusive industry will be critical to the long-term success of gender representation efforts.

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09

# Conclusion and Outlook

The findings from the Women in Maritime Survey 2024 present a mixed picture of progress and persistent challenges in achieving gender equality within the maritime sector. While some sub-sectors have demonstrated notable improvements in female representation, others continue to experience stagnation or even decline. The data underscores the need for a multi-faceted, holistic approach to fostering a more inclusive and equitable industry.

One of the key takeaways from this year's Survey is that women make up less than a quarter of the overall workforce in surveyed companies, accounting for only 16% of the total share. This highlights the extent to which maritime remains a male-dominated

industry. However, positive trends are evident in advertising, recruitment, ship brokerage, and emerging fields such as ESG and decarbonisation services. On the other hand, the decline in female participation in marine insurance, legal services and ship ownership, and also across mid-management roles, compared with the previous Survey, signals ongoing barriers that hinder career advancement for women. These disparities suggest that while awareness of gender diversity has increased, tangible systemic changes are still needed to ensure sustained progress.

Maritime clusters, encompassing industries like shipping, logistics, and marine energy, are pivotal to global economic growth. Nevertheless, despite their significant contributions, women remain underrepresented in these sectors, with very few women visible in leadership roles or in the seagoing workforce.

Although some sub-sectors have achieved gains in gender parity within board and C-suite roles, the maritime industry continues to exhibit significant imbalances at the highest levels of decision-making. The 2024 Survey data indicates a correlation between female board representation and the presence of formal gender equality policies, suggesting that increasing diversity at the leadership level can have a ripple effect throughout an organisation. However, achieving greater gender balance in leadership requires concerted efforts to address unconscious bias, improve mentorship opportunities, and implement targeted leadership development programmes for women.

A particularly stark challenge remains in seafaring

roles, where women at sea comprise just over 1% of the surveyed workforce. The difficulties women face in succeeding professionally at sea, such as challenging social dynamics onboard, systemic employment barriers and harsh physical conditions, are highlighted in the '15 key pain points for women at sea'<sup>1</sup> report conducted by the All Aboard Alliance in the Diversity@Sea initiative. Addressing these issues requires regulatory oversight, improved workplace policies, and proactive measures from industry stakeholders to create safer and more enabling environments for women seafarers.

Education and training institutions play a critical role in shaping the sector's future workforce. There has been increased participation from private maritime academies and research institutions in the Survey, indicating growing recognition of the need to invest in skills development for women. However, the continued underrepresentation of women in specialist technical and operational training programmes highlights the importance of early intervention strategies to attract more women into core maritime roles from the outset.

## Outlook

Looking ahead, the maritime industry must adopt a more structured and proactive approach to gender inclusion. Key recommendations include increasing transparency in gender-related reporting and tracking of workforce trends, both of which are essential to ensure accountability and drive meaningful change.

It is vital that more companies and organisations **collect and share relevant data** about their workforce, including the representation of women. Regularly gathering this information not only helps

## Recommendations for Industry Organisations

01 Collect and share gender-disaggregated data



02 Increase transparency through reporting



03 Enhance targeted retention and recruitment strategies



04 Invest in mentoring and leadership development programmes



05 Improve gender policy implementation



06 Create a safe and supportive working environment





09 Conclusion and Outlook

track the effectiveness of gender diversity policies, but also facilitates participation in industry-wide initiatives like this Survey, which promote transparency. This remains an urgent matter as some sectors - such as fisheries - did not submit any data, leaving gender diversity in those areas largely unexamined and inaccessible.

**Enhanced recruitment and retention initiatives** are crucial to address the global maritime workforce shortages and to attract more women to the sector. Showcasing inspiring stories of women who have made significant contributions across a range of maritime roles is key to promoting the industry as a viable and rewarding career path. Many industry social media campaigns - including some by IMO and WISTA - showcase role models that will inspire and support the attraction and recruitment of the next generations of women - or women from other sectors - into the maritime workforce. Implementing gender targets or quotas, where appropriate, along with fostering an inclusive workplace culture that actively promotes diversity, are initiatives that could enhance the visibility and attractiveness of maritime employers.

Expanding **mentorship and leadership development programmes**, will support efforts to retain women in the workforce and contribute to expanding the share of women in senior leadership positions. Improving the opportunities for female employees, women-owned businesses and women in management positions will further strengthen parity in decision-making roles.

Whilst there is no known evidence of implementation in the maritime sector to date, the United Kingdom's

Institute of Chartered Accountants has published an article on 'How to reap the benefits of a shadow board'<sup>2</sup>. Opportunities to plug skills gaps at both senior and junior levels and strengthen the quality and impact of decision-making, amongst other benefits, are featured.

**Strengthening policy implementation** is essential to support a zero-tolerance stance against violence, including safety risks and harassment in the workplace - an especially important step, as many women continue to face unwanted attention in professional settings.

Women must also be **guaranteed a safe and supportive working environment** - one that includes access to appropriate health and safety equipment, protection from bullying and harassment, and freedom from professional marginalisation. A healthy work-life balance is also essential, especially as women are still often tasked with the majority of caring responsibilities in many cultures. Furthermore, career support that actively creates clear pathways to professional advancement is vital to ensuring long-term success.

The evolving landscape of the maritime industry presents both opportunities and challenges in achieving gender equality. While progress is evident in some areas, the persistence of structural barriers demands sustained action and commitment from industry leaders, policymakers, and educational institutions. By leveraging the insights from this Survey, the maritime sector can work towards a future where women are not only present but thrive across all areas of the industry - from ship decks to boardrooms

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# IV

## Final Thoughts

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### Delivering meaningful change

Gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace are essential not only for attracting and retaining top talent in the maritime sector, but also for contributing to a more equitable and just society. The inaugural Women in Maritime Survey, conducted three years ago, was designed to establish baseline data on the employment of women across the maritime sector. This latest edition builds upon that foundation by assessing the progress made by IMO Member States and the private sector towards achieving gender equality. The increased number of respondents in this Survey is a welcome development, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of addressing gender disparities within the industry.

But recognition alone is not enough. It must be accompanied by tangible action. We must progress beyond publicly acknowledging the importance of gender equality and boosting the visibility of women. Maritime organisations across the public and private sectors must take steps to actively dismantle systemic barriers that hinder women's success in the Workplace. The role of male allies in this endeavour cannot be underestimated.

### Culture is key

The most critical aspect of this endeavour is cultural change, without which any initiatives implemented risk being superficial and ultimately unsustainable.

Actions that deliver change will only flourish when underpinned by a genuine shift in mindset – one that actively challenges unconscious biases, confronts discriminatory behaviours, values diverse perspectives at all levels and aligns with the spirit of policies put in place. Equitable hiring practices, transparent promotion processes, equal pay audits and appropriate systems of support (including gender inclusive health and safety measures) are crucial steps.

Sustainable cultural change is achieved through the combined impact of strong leadership, targeted policies, measurable objectives, and consistent performance monitoring; underpinned by a genuine commitment to transformation. Gender parity requires more than time; it demands intentional, sustained effort. This includes defining clear metrics for success, engaging personnel with relevant expertise, conducting regular reviews of progress, and, crucially, listening to the experiences and perspectives of women across maritime organisations in both the public and private sectors.

### Measuring progress

Despite growing efforts to support women in maritime, progress remains uneven across regions and sub-sectors. The data indicates that substantial progress is still needed to achieve the objectives of UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 for gender equality. The purpose of the Survey is not to criticise or assign blame, but rather to inspire and give a basis for action. We encourage organisations to assess their current gender related initiatives against the recommendations included in this report, which can be implemented irrespective of geographical location or size of the workforce. While a number of respondents to this Survey have

implemented some of the recommendations, there is still room for improvement. Organisations leading the way must continue their progress and share information about problems faced along with solutions identified. Those that are in the early stages of their inclusive workforce journey should actively seek the necessary information and support, which can be accessed online, through membership of gender-related networks and via experts in the field. Best practice from other sectors can often be adapted and applied to the maritime industry.

### Looking forward

The findings of the IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey underscore a critical juncture for the industry. While progress has been noted, the persistent disparities highlight the urgent need to move beyond dialogue to decisive implementation. The wealth of data presented, coupled with readily available expertise, provides a clear roadmap for advancement.

Maritime and its various sub-sectors must implement tangible actions that result in a working culture in which women are welcomed, nurtured and given the tools for success. Given the environmental, digital and technological challenges the sector is working to overcome, it is imperative that Member States and industry players attract and retain individuals with the right skills to help it evolve.

For women to feel truly welcomed into the workforce, maritime must actively nurture environments in which they can thrive. This is not merely a recommendation, but a fundamental imperative for a equitable and sustainable future for the sector as a whole.

# V

## Appendix A: Methodology

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The International Maritime Organization (IMO<sup>1</sup>), and the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA International<sup>2</sup>) launched the inaugural Women in Maritime Survey in 2021 to examine the proportion and distribution of women working in the maritime sector, from support roles to executive level positions. The Survey was part of a series of activities aimed at laying the groundwork for further discussions on how to build a more diverse workforce within the maritime sector, essential for a sustainable future. The data obtained by the Survey helped build a picture of diversity and gender equality in the industry. The first Survey was run by IHS Markit (now S&P Global) and results can be downloaded [here](#)<sup>3</sup>.

The second global Women in Maritime Survey was conducted by [Intent Communications Ltd](#)<sup>4</sup>, on behalf of the IMO and WISTA International. The Survey, which will run every three years, was live between 2 September 2024 and 31 December 2024. An extension to the Survey was issued and it ran until 23:59 (GMT) on 31 January 2025.

The Survey collects essential baseline data about women's participation in the maritime and ocean fields, offering a global snapshot of their representation across various roles. The findings will help identify trends and inform the development of targeted programmes and policies to strengthen gender diversity in these fields.

By providing comparable global data, the Survey advances the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs<sup>5</sup>) and supports efforts to create a more inclusive environment in the maritime sector.

### Gathering information

Data gathering for the report was carried out through two separate online questionnaires, one targeting the industry and the other targeting IMO Member States, both conducted using Google forms.

#### Group 1: IMO Member States questionnaire

The Women in Maritime Survey invited all 176 Member States and three Associate Members, via Circular Letter No.4842/Add.1, to each appoint a Survey Focal Point, who was tasked with collecting the required information from the different entities or departments within their government and filling out the questionnaire.

The questionnaire link was directly emailed to the registered Survey Focal Point for each Member State. These individuals had access to dedicated information briefings and drop-in consultation sessions to assist in submitting the required data. Member States could appoint a Focal Point at any time up to 13 December 2024. Upon registration, the questionnaire link was sent to the designated individual.

#### Group 2: The industry questionnaire

The industry questionnaire was designed to gather information from private entities involved in the maritime sector, regardless of size - from self-employed individuals to micro-businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises, and large corporate entities. This includes companies, non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations, educational institutions, universities and private maritime training institutes/academies. The industry questionnaire covered both land-based and seafaring employees. Even if an organisation did not employ seafarers, participation was still recommended.

Those responsible for or who worked in human resources, personnel departments, or had access to their organisation's employment data, were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on behalf of their company or institution. Each entity was asked to submit only one response.

The industry questionnaire was subject to a data spambot event on the evening of 8th January 2025, but was identified at a relatively early stage and no data was compromised. The low risk event was mitigated through additional cyber security measures, such as Captcha, and the questionnaire re-



V Appendix A:  
Methodology

opened in less than 24 hours, on the morning of 9th January 2025. All data received via the spambot was screened and purged to maintain data integrity. The final data analysis combined the information gathered using both links.

Cleaning the data

Data analysis for the report was conducted on the two questionnaires (more details below). A key focus for the 2024 Survey, relative to 2021, has been enhancing the ability to conduct regional analyses and compare countries within their respective regions. This approach enables analysts to identify trends and develop recommendations to strengthen overall regional performance. Regional analysis was conducted on both data sets, leveraging the IMO's regional categorisations for technical cooperation purposes.

The Member States data set was initially cleansed to identify and review any submissions that contained data outside the designated timeline (between 2021 and 2024). Where data was received from an overseas territory, such as Curacao, their data was included in the overall Member States data. It should also be noted that the Member States questionnaire in the 2024 Survey has seen a change in the categorisation of data graph 1, as the section on 'Promoting maritime trade' from the 2021 Survey has been replaced by 'Port State MOUs.'

The industry data set was initially cleansed to remove duplicate entries from multiple submissions by different employees for the same entity. Priority was given to employees designated to respond according to the data gathering guidelines. Where the same individuals responded multiple times, both the completeness of the data and the use of official

versus personal e-mail addresses were verified.

Data overview

The Member States questionnaire received 94 responses out of the 176 Member States, with 88 providing complete sets of data. This represents a significant increase compared to the 2021 Survey, which counted with 45 complete data sets.

The Industry questionnaire received a total of 608 complete responses from companies and organisations across 37 different sub-sectors, ranging from shipowners and classification societies to maritime technology companies and port operations & services. This is an increase from the 513 responses received in 2021.

Analysing the results

This report compares applicable data from the 2024 and 2021 Surveys, to provide an in-depth analysis of gender diversity trends, outlining successful initiatives, gaps in gender equality, and opportunities for future development within the maritime workforces across the public and private sectors.

The Survey examined the presence of women in maritime workforces across the industry, focusing on topics such as recruitment and retention, maritime education and training, and maritime networks and associations. It examined women in leadership roles, including boards, C-Suite, Ministers and Heads of Maritime Administrations; as well as mid-management, technical and specialist operational (core) and support roles. The aim was to track trends and shifts in perception among anonymised respondents.

The Survey questionnaires have largely remained the same between 2024 and 2021, though additional

data points have improved existing sections and allowed for the inclusion of new sections to the report.

For the Member States questionnaire, this included enhancements in maritime education data, specifically focusing on national maritime academies and maritime-related universities. Gender data was also collected on maritime-related Ministers and a broader range of data was gathered on policies that promote gender equality.

For the industry questionnaire, new data points were introduced related to seafarers and women at sea, as well as engagements with maritime networks and associations. A broader range of data was also collected on policies promoting gender equality, and changes to the section on maritime education were made to capture broader private to public training programmes .

The data received from the following countries included fewer than five respondents. Countries marked with an asterisk (\*) had responses from only one company or organization.

Algeria; Australia; Azerbaijan\*; Bangladesh\*; Barbados\*; Belize\*; Bulgaria\*; Chile; Colombia; Dominican Republic\*; Egypt; Estonia; Georgia; Guatemala; Iceland\*; Indonesia\*; Iraq\*; Ireland\*; Japan; Jordan\*; Kenya\*; Luxembourg\*; Madagascar; Malta\*; Mauritius\*; Monaco\*; Myanmar; Namibia\*; New Zealand; Pakistan\*; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Poland\*; Portugal; Republic of Korea\*; Saudi Arabia\*; Somalia\*; Sri Lanka\*; Switzerland; Thailand; Timor-Leste\*; Uganda\*; Ukraine; Vanuatu\* and Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of.

The methodology for generating graphics involved

analysing the number of responses from participants to determine the relative numbers, percentages, distribution based on geography, company/ organisation, and/or sub-sector. Further validations were conducted as data was visualised, and any evident errors, such as where the total number of women exceeded the total number of employees, led to the omission of that data.

Global and regional data is leveraged in the graphs, as appropriate.

The numbers represented as percentages in this report have been rounded, either up or down, to the nearest whole number for reader ease. For example, 5.8% would be represented as 6%, but 5.25% would be represented as 5%. The data in the graphs has been left with two decimal points, as rounding up or down would impact total percentages.

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International Maritime Organization

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