



INTERNATIONAL  
MARITIME  
ORGANIZATION

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4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT  
LONDON SE1 7SR

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611

Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

Circular Letter No. 5119  
11 February 2026

To: All IMO Member States

Subject: **Gender-inclusive Leadership in Maritime training course, Malmo, Sweden.**

1 The Secretary-General is pleased to announce that the 2026 iteration of the Gender-inclusive Leadership in Maritime training course (previously titled Maritime Women's Leadership and Empowerment training course), sponsored by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA International), and delivered by the World Maritime University (WMU), will be held in a hybrid format, consisting of three days of remote learning, followed by one week on-site at WMU in Malmö, Sweden, and an additional two days of remote learning once participants have returned to their home countries. The dates for the three stages of the training are as follows:

- a. Stage A (online) from 2 to 4 June 2026;
- b. Stage B (in-person) from 22 to 26 June 2026; and
- c. Stage C (online) from 7 to 8 July 2026.

2 The primary objective of this course is to strengthen high-level leadership and strategic management capacities among mid-career professionals in the maritime sector, with a particular emphasis on promoting gender equality and inclusive leadership in decision-making roles. The course is designed primarily for professionals working in the public sector across maritime domains, including maritime administrations, port authorities, coast guards, and maritime education and training institutions.

3 Fellowships for women participants from developing countries are offered under the IMO Women in Maritime Programme. In addition, professionals working in the private sector who are members of WISTA International may be eligible to participate through the granting of fellowships by the Association.<sup>1</sup> Men and women wishing to take part in the course on a self-sponsored basis are kindly invited to apply directly via the designated focal point at WMU by emailing [maritime.leadership@wmu.se](mailto:maritime.leadership@wmu.se).

4 The course will be conducted in the English language only. It will consist of interactive lectures, workshops, case studies, and group exercises led by experts in maritime leadership, public speaking, project management, and team-building. The key objectives of the course are to:

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<sup>1</sup> Instructions on how to apply for the fellowships offered by WISTA International will be communicated to all WISTA members by the Association in due course.

- .1 enhance participants' leadership competencies, including self-awareness, confidence, and decision-making skills;
  - .2 strengthen participants' ability to manage teams, projects, and organizational challenges effectively;
  - .3 provide a forum for knowledge-sharing, networking, and collaboration among women leaders in the maritime industry; and
  - .4 promote gender equity in maritime leadership by addressing barriers to advancement.
- 5 The course will cover a range of essential topics, including but not limited to:
- .1 project design and management;
  - .2 critical thinking & gender mainstreaming;
  - .3 entrepreneurship;
  - .4 strategic thinking;
  - .5 leadership;
  - .6 team-building;
  - .7 effective communication;
  - .8 public speaking;
  - .9 coaching and mentoring; and
  - .10 career development and guidance.
- 6 Course fees, flights, accommodation, and meals during the on-site week in Malmö will be covered for the 15 selected participants through IMO funding. In addition, IMO will provide each participant with a daily allowance of USD \$15 for incidental expenses and USD \$252 for terminal expenses. However, nominating authorities are required to continue the salary payments of their officials attending the WMU training course for its duration.
- 7 Participants are responsible for:
- .1 securing the appropriate entry visa to Sweden for the on-site component at their own expense and/or that of their nominating authority or employer; and
  - .2 obtaining adequate travel insurance, valid for all countries in which the participant may be staying, residing, transiting, or traveling to/from, irrespective of the purpose or reason for the travel or mode of transport. Selected participants will be required to provide documentary evidence of travel insurance.
- 8 Participants sponsored by IMO will be covered for the duration of their fellowship by the United Nations Group Medical insurance for fellows worldwide, to which IMO is a participant.
- 9 Applicants must demonstrate fluency in English, as evidenced through their application, participation during the course, and their ability to articulate how the course will benefit their home country. English proficiency will be assessed throughout the application process and may include a brief phone call or video interview.
- 10 Additionally, nominating authorities are strongly advised to refrain from putting forward applicants who are graduates of the World Maritime University (WMU) and/or the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI), as the course is intended to provide leadership training opportunities for those who have not previously benefited from education at WMU and/or IMLI. Any applicant who is applying for a WMU academic programme (MSc, PhD, or postgraduate diploma) should disclose this at the time of application. Applications from graduates who do not disclose their WMU and IMLI qualifications will be considered invalid and may be eliminated from the selection process.

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11 Participation is offered on the widest possible geographical basis, but the number of admissions per country is limited. Accordingly, should nominations be made for two or more candidates from one country, a priority order should be indicated by the nominating authority.

12 Preference will be given to officials in the early to middle stages of their careers who demonstrate high potential for leadership, as well as members of the IMO-established regional Women in Maritime Association (WIMAs).

13 Applicants seeking an IMO fellowship for this course are required to complete an application comprising two components:

- .1 the applicant or nominating authority shall complete all required information in the online application portal at <https://wmuhq.questionpro.eu/maritimeleadership26>
- .2 the following documents shall be uploaded in the designated section of the application portal:
  - .1 a completed and signed version of the form located in the annex to this Circular Letter, which shall be signed by a duly authorized officer of the nominating Government or organization and bear the official seal or stamp of the nominating authority;
  - .2 a copy of the applicant's current curriculum vitae (maximum two pages);
  - .3 a copy of the data page of the applicant's passport (showing, at a minimum, the holder's name, passport number, date and place of issue, and date of expiry); and
  - .4 an official letter confirming the applicant's release by their employer, should the applicant be selected for the course.

14 Both components must be completed in order for an application to be considered. Upon successful submission of the application, the nominating authority will receive a confirmation email. **All application materials must be received by WMU through the application portal no later than 13 March 2026.** Applications received after that date may not be considered.

15 Participants and nominating authorities should note that only candidates selected for an IMO fellowship award will be contacted. Please note that IMO and WMU will not enter into correspondence with the nominating authorities or the applicants regarding the status of their applications.

16 For any additional queries, please email [maritime.leadership@wmu.se](mailto:maritime.leadership@wmu.se).

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**ANNEX**

**Application to attend the Gender-inclusive Leadership in Maritime training course in Malmo, Sweden**

**Part I – Nomination** (to be completed by a duly authorized officer of the nominating Government and uploaded to the application portal)

The Government of \_\_\_\_\_ nominates:  
Family name or surname: \_\_\_\_\_  
First name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Middle name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Maiden or other name(s) (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

for a fellowship to study at the **Gender-inclusive Leadership in Maritime training course**, and certifies that:

- (a) the studies under this fellowship are necessary for the advancement of the economic and social sustainable development of the country and its public institutions, and that in the case of a fellowship being granted, the beneficiary will bring the knowledge garnered from the course to bear on the country/nominating institution;
- (b) all information supplied by the nominee is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief;
- (c) the nominee has an adequate working knowledge, appropriately tested, of the language in which this course will be presented (English);
- (d) the absence of the nominee during the period of the studies abroad would not have any adverse effect on the nominee's status, seniority, salary, pension or similar employee rights;
- (e) the nominee's salary and benefits will continue to be paid while the nominee is attending the course;
- (f) the nominee has adequate travel insurance coverage to cover his or her stay in Malmo and return travel to their home country; and
- (g) this administration has allocated funding to pay for the visa costs of the nominated candidate to attend the course, should they be selected to participate.

On return from the fellowship, it is proposed to employ the fellow as follows:

Title of post: \_\_\_\_\_

With the following duties and responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify

that I am duly authorized by the said Government to make this nomination and state that:

my title is: \_\_\_\_\_

and my office address is: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed and dated by me at: \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of authorized official*

**Part II – Candidate information** *(to be completed by the candidate)*

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Please visit the application portal to complete Part II of the application  
<https://wmuhq.questionpro.eu/maritimeleadership26>.