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Exmar takes the lead with ammonia-powered gas carriers set to deliver in 2026



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Belgian owner Exmar will become the first shipowner in the world to take delivery of ammonia powered ships in the first half of 2026. Exmar has two 46,000 cu m LPG carriers contracted earlier this year with Hyundai Mipo Dockyard, with these ships set to be able to operate on ammonia or LPG. The engines will be delivered by WINGD and the fuel supply system by Wärtsilä Gas Solutions.

"As leading global transporters of ammonia, we are proud to be developing vessels with an operational carbon footprint reduction of 90%, which significantly exceeds the International Maritime Organization's emissions reduction targets. This is possible thanks to the decades of experience of Exmar's operational and technical teams, and the joint effort and contribution of all our project partners," said Carl-Antoine Saverys, executive director at Exmar.

WinGD director of sales, Volkmar Galke said: "Ammonia is set to become a mainstream sustainable marine fuel and energy carrier by mid-century, and we are delighted to be working with Exmar to ensure that the vessels carrying the cargo will be among the first to use it.

Thanks to close cooperation with the owner, shipyard, engine builder Hyundai Heavy Industries and other stakeholders, WinGD's X52DF-A will be available soon – not just for ammonia carriers but also for a range of other vessel types that can benefit from ammonia as a fuel."

Ammonia as shipping's ultimate alternative fuel has been gaining a lot of traction of late. The International Energy Agency (IEA) said in a recent update of its *Net Zero by 2050* report that shipping will primarily turn to ammonia to decarbonise the sector.

"Ammonia is the primary low-emissions fuel used to decarbonise shipping, with the contributions from biofuels and hydrogen limited in large part by their relatively high costs," the IEA said.

Writing the introduction for *Splash's* recently published *Ship Concept 2030* magazine, Dr Roar Adland, global head of research at SSY, and Dr Tristan Smith, reader at UCL Energy Institute, commented on the future fuel race: "From a purely economic point of view, few would disagree that ammonia is the frontrunner: The production of sufficiently cheap hydrogen is the constraint for all alternative fuels, but all green fuels except ammonia are subject to the additional cost and constraint of carbon extraction."

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