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Maersk heads to China for up to twelve 16,000 teu ships

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Maersk Line

Brokers are reporting Maersk has gone to China for its next phase of expansion, with landmark orders for LNG dual-fuel vessels, a type of propulsion it had previously distanced itself from.

Multiple broking houses have the Danish carrier signing for six firm 16,000 teu ships at New Times Shipbuilding in a contract that comes with options for six more vessels.

The ships – costing $200m per unit – are due for delivery in 2028.

Maersk officials have yet to confirm the orders.

Unveiling its interims in August, Maersk outlined its newbuild policy through to 2030, with two notable news items. First, its intention not to increase its fleet size above today's 4.3m teu through to the end of the decade, and secondly, Maersk's admission that it will proceed with orders for dual fuel ships which can use bio-LNG, a fuel type the carrier had previously dismissed.

Maersk said at its last quarterlies it is in the process of signing newbuilding orders and time-charter contracts for dual-fuel vessels matching the planned renewal pace of around 160,000 teu per year.

Maersk has elected a mix of methanol and liquified gas dual-fuel propulsion systems.

“While green methanol is likely to become the most competitive and scalable pathway to decarbonization in the short term, Maersk also foresees a multifuel future for the industry which includes liquified bio-methane,” the company stated in a release.