

Buyers Alliance Launches Large Tender to Support E-Fuel Container Shipping



Hapag-Lloyd launches the first service as the second tender sets ambitious goals for e-fuels (Hapag-Lloyd)

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The buyers' alliance established in 2023 to spur demand for decarbonization in shipping officially opened its second, larger tender for shipping services this time requiring the use of the e-fuel. It comes as the first contract which was awarded to Hapag-Lloyd for low-emission shipper services is set to kick off in 2025 and run into 2026.

The concept behind the initiative known as ZEMBA (Zero Emission Maritime Buyers Alliance) and facilitated by the Aspen Institute builds demand by aggregating the shipping needs of members ranging from Ikea and Nike to Levi Strauss and Electrolux. Over forty major manufacturing and consumer brands are currently members of the alliance. The group launched its first tender in 2024 saying the goal was to accelerate commercial deployment of clean energy powered shipping. By aggregating demand, they are enabling economies of scale and building lead-edge demand to encourage the shipping and fuel industries to pursue their initiatives.

Under the first tender, well-known brands including Amazon, Patagonia, Bauhaus, New Balance, Nike, REI, and others agreed to purchase over one billion TEU miles on the route between Singapore and Rotterdam in 2025 and 2026. Hapag as the winner of the tender agreed to provide an independently certified and exclusive waste-based biomethane service.

The second tender launched today and accepting proposals through the spring of 2025 shifts to a focus on e-fuels. ZEMBA reported in October 2024 that a survey of the industry found sufficient predicted supply of both e-methanol and e-methanol-capable vessels in the container segment to

support ZEMBA's focus on e-fuel deployment. They noted however that many producers remained at the pre-FID stage, casting doubt on whether those projects would begin production on projected timelines and, related, if e-fuel-capable dual fuel vessels would actually run on e-fuels without spurring demand.

With the second tender, ZEMBA intends to aggregate approximately 86 billion tonne nautical miles of demand for the emissions abatement associated with e-fuel-powered shipping to be deployed starting in 2027. This equates to 1.5 million TEU transported across the Pacific by e-fuels, assuming a benchmark distance of Shanghai to Los Angeles and projects enabling companies to abate approximately 500,000 metric tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, subject to final commercial details.

"Getting e-fuel-powered shipping on the water for the first time through this collaborative forward procurement will be a huge technical and commercial innovation milestone for the sector," said Ingrid Irigoyen, President and CEO of ZEMBA.

A qualifying bid for ZEMBA's tender will be a proposal from a containership carrier or consortium for e-fuel-powered shipping for three to five years, starting around 2027. All bids must demonstrate at least a 90 percent lifecycle emission reduction for the primary propulsion of the vessels compared to a high-emission fuel baseline.

ZEMBA will select the best proposal(s), and after vetting and commercial negotiation, members will enter bilateral contracts with the winner(s). For this tender, ZEMBA is open to the potential of multiple winners. Results of the second tender are expected to be announced by the end of 2025.