

Panama Canal incentivises low carbon vessel transits

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) is introducing what it calls NetZero Slot for Neo-Panamax vessels that meet emissions criteria.

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The Hoegh Aurora, uses low environmental impact fuels and is equipped with solar panels to reduce its carbon footprintCredit: ACP

The new initiative will start on 5 October this year and will see transit space reserved for Neo-Panamax vessels with lower emissions.

The ACP Deputy Administrator and Sustainability Chief Officer, Ilya Marotta said that this initiative aligns with the [Panama Canal's](#) broader sustainability strategy.

"By incentivising investment in vessels capable of using low-carbon fuels and energy-efficient technologies, we are recognising and rewarding our customers who are leading the transition to a more sustainable future," said Marotta.

The first phase of the programme will offer a weekly NetZero Slot for eligible vessels, which are equipped with dual-fuel engines using at least one fuel with a carbon intensity below 75 gCO₂(e)/MJ (measured from extraction to combustion).

NetZero Slot is aimed at giving priority to vessels using energy sources such as LNG, ammonia, or hydrogen-based alternatives that meet the carbon intensity thresholds as outlined for Phase 1.

This slot will be available 30 days before the transit date under period 1A competition.

The selected vessels will benefit from:

- Flexible scheduling: Choice of transit date within the designated week.

-Guaranteed transit time: Completion of passage within 24 hours.

-Just-in-time (JIT) service: Ensuring optimised transit efficiency.

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During Phase 2 - due to begin in 2026 - will see the incorporation of further green technological solutions, thus expanding the scope of qualifying ships. Ship owners and operators will be required to submit a technology screening report for their vessels, evaluating their energy efficiency-oriented technologies.

In terms of fuel eligibility, ships that can qualify for the NetZero Slot need to be certified to use specific low-carbon fuels.