

Maersk's posts \$1.3 bn Q1 profit, geopolitical tensions cloud outlook

AP Moller – Maersk's Q1 profit is down the previous quarter as it sees volatile times ahead in 2025.

Marcus Hand, Editor

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Credit: Maersk

The owner of the world's second largest container line reported a Q1 2025 EBIT of \$1.25 billion a significant improvement on a \$177 million EBIT for the same quarter a year earlier. However, it is down from the \$2.1 billion that Maersk earned in the fourth quarter of 2024 as container shipping markets come under increasing geopolitical and capacity pressures. Maersk described the sequential drop as "expected".

Overall revenues for the group grew 7.8% in Q1 2025 to \$13.32 billion compared to \$12.36 billion in the same quarter last year.

Despite a slow start 2024 was [Maersk's](#) third most profitable ever as container shipping benefitted from the impact of diversions via the Cape of Good Hope to avoid Houthi attacks in the Red Sea which soaked up large amounts of new capacity coming into the market and sharp increases in freight rates.

This year has been marked by further increases in geopolitical tensions with the new Trump administration imposing import tariffs of up to 145% on Chinese goods, and on-off announcements on many other major exporters to the [US](#) putting trade under pressure. Meanwhile a ceasefire has been agreed this week between the US and the Houthi for the Yemen rebel group to stop targeting commercial shipping in the Red Sea.

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If this truce holds and container ships return to transiting the [Suez Canal](#) on the Asia – Europe/Med trades it would have major downward pressure on freight rates due to increased available capacity at a time when newbuildings continue to flood the market.

Maersk's core ocean business, or its container line, reported an EBIT of \$743 million for Q1 2025 compared to negative \$161 million in the same period 2024. The first quarter of this year has seen the start of the Gemini Cooperation with [Hapag-Lloyd](#) from the beginning of February with an aim of 90% reliability on the east – west trades.

The much-vaunted logistics business saw a Q1 2025 EBIT \$142 million up from \$54 million in the same period a year earlier, making up just 11.4% of the group total. The terminals business under [APM Terminals](#) reported an EBIT of \$394 million for Q1 2025 up from \$300 million the same period last year.

Commenting on the Q1 results Maersk CEO Vincent Clerc said: "We delivered strong results compared to the same quarter last year, driven by momentum in our operational efficiency and a global economy in good shape for the first three months. With trade tensions flaring up and uncertainty on the rise, global supply chains are once again in the spotlight."

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Despite the geopolitical tensions Maersk has maintained its previously announced full guidance of an EBIT ranging from breakeven to \$3 billion. The lower end of the range implies the shipping company would be in the red by the end of the year.

With the new alliance with Hapag-Lloyd Clerc remained confident of its ability to deal with the challenges ahead saying: "From the most reliable ocean network to one of the best lead logistics and customs support teams, we are pulling every lever to help them make the best decisions for their business. At the same time, we are doubling down on the work underway on automation and cost management to remain fit for what lies ahead. These efforts give us the confidence to deliver a result in line with our guidance communicated in February,"