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FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMO LIFE CYCLE GHG ASSESSMENT (LCA) FRAMEWORK

Re-establishment of the correspondence group on other social and economic sustainability aspects of marine fuels to safeguard net-zero goals

Submitted by Pacific Environment, CSC and EDF

SUMMARY

Executive summary:	This document proposes that the Working Group recommend the Committee to re-establish the correspondence group on other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels at MEPC 84. It provides potential terms of reference for the same.
Strategic direction, if applicable:	3
Output:	3.2
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 13
Related documents:	MEPC 83/INF.5, MEPC 83/7/9, MEPC 83/17; MEPC 81/7/4; MEPC 80/7/4; MEPC 79/7/12; ISWG-GHG 18/2/21; ISWG-GHG 20/3, ISWG-GHG 20/3/1 and ISWG-GHG 20/3/7

Background

1 As stated and summarized in document MEPC 83/7/9 (United States), the Committee adopted resolution MEPC.391(81) on the *2024 Guidelines on life cycle GHG intensity of marine fuels* (2024 LCA Guidelines) and endorsed the recommendations of ISWG-GHG 16 on follow-up work on the further development of the LCA framework.

2 To fulfil this obligation to further develop the LCA framework, MEPC 81 established the Correspondence Group on Further Development of the LCA Framework (the Correspondence Group). The Correspondence Group was mandated to advance intersessionally on "other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels" and was instructed to use the 2024 LCA Guidelines as a basis, while also taking into account previous reports of the Correspondence Group (MEPC 81/7/4, MEPC 80/7/4 and MEPC 79/7/12) and relevant decisions and comments made at ISWG-GHG 16 and MEPC 81.

Re-establishing the Correspondence Group

3 The Correspondence Group organized three rounds of discussions on "other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels", as referred to in paragraph 7.1 of the 2024 LCA Guidelines, for possible inclusion in the Guidelines. The results of those consultations were submitted as documents MEPC 83/7/9 and MEPC 83/INF.5 (United States).

4 Document MEPC 83/7/34 (CSC) commented on the report of the Correspondence Group, highlighting the significant potential for integrating social and economic sustainability considerations more comprehensively within the life cycle and land-to-sea assessment criteria of the LCA. The document emphasized that methane-based fuels—such as LNG, e-methane, and bio-LNG—serve as pertinent case studies to illustrate the necessity of this approach. It further demonstrated how, when assessed through a robust and holistic LCA framework, the production and use of such fuels would likely be deemed incompatible with pathways towards zero-emission marine fuels.

5 As described in document MEPC 83/7/34, discussions around the LCA framework originally focused on the upstream emissions of various production processes and downstream emissions from marine engines, with minimal attention given to the social, economic, sovereignty, health and the resultant demands on local healthcare systems and environmental impacts of fuel production.

6 The work of the Correspondence Group was fruitful but incomplete. Some progress was made and documented in the Correspondence Group’s report, paragraph 28 of document MEPC 83/7/9. Specifically, there was broad agreement on the production of sustainable marine fuels to: respect formal and customary land and water use rights, including Indigenous and/or customary rights; respect human and labour rights and contribute to social and economic development of local and rural communities; and promote food security. All of these aspects are essential and important pieces to any comprehensive approach to sustainable fuel development and uptake.

7 Document ISWG-GHG 20/3/7 (CSC) proposed the re-establishment of the Correspondence Group on other social and economic sustainability aspects of marine fuels to safeguard net-zero goals due to the risks the Organization faces in undermining sustainable fuel development and falling short of its decarbonization goals, failure to contribute to a just and equitable transition (JET), and address, as appropriate, disproportionate negative impacts (DNI) unless it fully considers climate, environmental, socio-economic, health, and pollution impacts.

8 Given the progress achieved during the work of the initial Correspondence Group, the acknowledgement by the Coordinator and participants in the Correspondence Group of its incomplete work, and calls from several Member States and international organizations during discussions at MEPC 83 as noted in paragraph 7.15 of document MEPC 83/17 on the re-establishing of the Correspondence Group, the co-sponsors recommend that the Working Group invite MEPC 84 to re-establish the Correspondence Group on "other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels" for potential inclusion in the 2024 LCA Guidelines. The co-sponsors have developed draft terms of reference for the Correspondence Group in the following section.

Recommended terms of reference for the re-established Correspondence Group

9 As described in document MEPC 83/7/9, the terms of reference directed the Correspondence Group to: using the 2024 LCA Guidelines as the basis, while also taking into account previous reports of the Correspondence Group on Further Development of the LCA Framework (MEPC 81/7/4, MEPC 80/7/4 and MEPC 79/7/12) and relevant decisions and comments made at ISWG-GHG 16 and MEPC 81:

.1 further consider "other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels", as referred to in paragraph 7.1 of the 2024 LCA Guidelines, for possible inclusion in the Guidelines; and

.2 submit a written report to MEPC 83.

10 As also described in document MEPC 83/7/9, the coordinator of the Correspondence Group suggested the following way forward:

.1 that the Committee notes the general consensus to continue to develop the five social and economic sustainability themes/aspects listed in paragraph 28 (MEPC 83/7/9);

.2 that the Committee continues to further refine possible metrics/indicators, with a focus on qualitative assessment, for all five social and economic sustainability themes/aspects. This work should be based on the highest rated possible indicators considered during the Correspondence Group's work; and

.3 further refinements should harmonize social and economic metrics/indicators with existing environmental sustainability themes/aspects set out in the 2024 LCA Guidelines.

11 The co-sponsors recommend the following terms of reference for the re-establishment of the Correspondence Group:

.1 further consider "other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels", as referred to in paragraph 7.1 of the 2024 LCA Guidelines, for possible inclusion in the Guidelines; and in particular:

.1 further develop the five social and economic sustainability themes/aspects listed in paragraph 28 of document MEPC 83/7/9;

.2 further refine possible metrics/indicators, with a focus on qualitative assessment, for all five social and economic sustainability themes/aspects based on the highest rated possible indicators considered during the Group's work, taking into account document MEPC 83/7/34; and

.3 where possible, harmonize social and economic metrics/indicators with existing environmental sustainability themes/aspects set out in the 2024 LCA Guidelines.

.2 submit a report to MEPC 85.

Proposal

12 The co-sponsors invite the Working Group to:

.1 develop draft terms of reference for a re-established correspondence group on "other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels" using those contained in paragraph 11 above as a basis; and

.2 recommend that the Committee re-establish the correspondence group on "other social and economic sustainability themes/aspects of marine fuels" at MEPC 84, taking into account the draft terms of reference developed by this Working Group.

Action requested of the Working Group

13 The Working Group is invited to consider the information provided in this document, in particular the proposal in paragraph 12, and to take action as appropriate.