

The flag of choice

World Commerce Review interviews Cameron Mitchell who discusses how the Isle of Man Ship Registry adds real value in a rapidly changing global maritime environment

The Isle of Man Ship Registry is one of the world's leading registers of ships and super yachts. A British register providing the very best in service to its valued clients; it is the flag of choice for owners looking for quality and partnership from a Flag Administration. *World Commerce Review* interviews Cameron Mitchell, the Director of the Registry, who discusses how they add real value in a rapidly changing global maritime environment.

How many vessels are currently registered under the Isle of Man flag?

The Isle of Man Ship Registry currently has 800 vessels with a combined tonnage of approximately 12.6 million GRT and is placed as the 17th largest Ship Registry in the world.

What services do you provide to owners of ships/yachts?

The Ship Registry's services include:

- Registration of ships and yachts.
- The Registration of mortgages.
- Different registration options for yachts (Commercial, Pleasure Yacht Charter Ready (PYCR), Pleasure Yacht Plus and pleasure yacht)
- The issue of statutory certification required by International Convention.
- Providing a robust, transparent and pragmatic regulatory framework for ship and yacht operation which meets International convention requirements.
- New build ship and yacht oversight.
- Ship and yacht in service survey and inspection. (Remote inspection and in person)

- Consultancy services for innovative designs/solutions leading to Alternative Designs and Arrangements and equivalent arrangements in line with International Convention requirements.
- Consultancy Services for large projects - Agreed Individual Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)'s, Statements of Work (SOW) and Non-disclosure Agreements NDA's)
- Endorsements of officer Certificates of Competency (not required for ship or yacht crew)
- 'Crew Matters' – Free Seafarer welfare App which provides a holistic approach to mental health and wellbeing, access to support 24/7 through ISWAN's SeafarerHelp and YachtcrewHelp and access to Chaplaincy services provided by Stella Maris worldwide.

Do (and if so how) the services you offer differ for commercial ships to those for pleasure or commercial yachts?

The only difference would be the increased options on the types of registration offered to yachts.

What are the benefits of registering a vessel in the Isle of Man?

- The Isle of Man is politically and financially stable (OECD, MONEYVAL).
- British Register, the Red Ensign flag provides access to British consular support & protection of the British Armed Forces worldwide.
- Same day and out of hours registration available.
- Customer focused/streamlined registration process – single point of contact for registration and survey.
- Industry leading online systems – including digital certificates & online processes and finance.
- Digital Crew Endorsements – Fast and simple online applications.

- 24/7 Emergency Response
- The Isle of Man is a preferred flag for ship and yacht finance and insurance purposes.
- Not for profit flag administration – sole purpose of diversifying the Isle of Man economy.
- No consular or casualty investigation fees.
- Green ship incentive - fee reduction for ships and yachts using alternative fuels, wind and wind to power technologies.
- World class technical expertise.

What makes the Isle of Man stand out against other flag states and within the wider maritime industry?

The Isle of Man maintains white list status on the Paris and Tokyo Memorandums of Understanding on Port State Control and Qualship 21 status with the United States Coastguard – this status represents Low risk and therefore Isle of Man Ship and Yachts have a low target factors for Port State Control Inspections.

The Isle of Man Ship Registry is an international flag and not classed as a Flag of Convenience (FOC) – The Isle of Man Ship Registry maintains high standards of regulatory compliance and is fully financed by the Isle of Man Government.

The Ship Registry has incorporated four SDG's into our operating model (already ISO9001 and 14001 certified):



Use our influence as a regulator to support and nurture innovation



Change our Flag State operating model through the use of new technology and our global network of representatives to reduce our carbon footprint and consumption of resources



First and only flag to join the Getting to Zero Coalition and introducing new incentives (15 % Fee Reduction) for alternative fuel technologies including LNG/LPG dual fuel engines



The Ship Registry joined [Eyesea.org](https://www.eyesea.org/) as a member and the Director as an ambassador to track marine pollution and marine hazards to influence effective clean-up operations

In June 2022 the Isle of Man Ship Registry helped sponsor the expansion of the Luna Foundation's beach clean-up work. As an example of their work, Luna successfully collected 450kg of trash from the Vasai Beach area (Mumbai) - in just one day. This project is managed by Eyesea and is an example of how linking pollution mapping and clean-ups yields measurable outcomes.

How does the Isle of Man Ship Register differ to that in the UK?

We are both British flags and indeed the Isle of Man Ship Registry is sometimes referred to as the second British register. However, we are both unique in our own ways and have differing USP's.

The Isle of Man Marine Administration was renamed the Isle of Man Ship Registry in 2007. This new name and logo provided the Isle of Man with a readily identifiable and distinct image when exhibiting at marketing and promotional events. It also set us apart from other British Flags and competitors.

As the new image was launched the Ship Registry also redefined its operating model, where quality of service and putting the customer first became our key priority and objective. The Isle of Man redefined the modern Ship Registry model and continues to do so.

The Isle of Man Ship Registry is described as a 'Quality flag of choice', the Ship Registry ethos is based around client/customer choice, and therefore we have designed our systems, processes and procedures with client expectation and aspiration in mind.

Internally the Ship Registry refers to the three pillars which support our culture, behaviours and values they are:

- I. Customer service.
- II. Customer service, and
- III. Customer service.

What benefits/advantages does being part of the Red Ensign Group offer?

Being part of the Red Ensign Group provides many benefits/advantages over other flag states which include:

1. Combined technical expertise; The Red Ensign Group (REG) meet twice per year at the REG Technical Forum (REG TF). REG TF discusses and makes decisions on technical matters affecting or likely to affect the group.

This can range from the approval of Alternative Designs & Arrangements (Equivalent arrangements) through to the introduction of new mandatory instruments agreed at the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

2. The REG also has a Recognised Organisation (Classification Society) oversight programme which is the envy of other flags.

The oversight programme received praise from the IMO within the last twelve months where the REG Cat 1 members were audited by the IMO for Compliance with the IMO Instruments Implementation Code.

3. The Red Ensign flag provides access to British consular support & protection of the British Armed Forces worldwide.

4. The REG receives support and guidance from intelligence services through the UK Department for Transport, International Shipping and Counter Piracy, Maritime Security Division.
5. Direct access to the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency.
6. World class Casualty Investigation Services through an agreement with the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch.

Tell us more about Crew Matters – your seafarer welfare app. What is it? Who is it aimed at? Will there be any new additions to the app in the near future?

Crew Matters provides structured social activities and welfare support for seafarers, through Tapiit's live and interactive studio streamed sessions with a full month's agenda of physical and mental wellbeing classes and educational trainings, including fitness and yoga sessions.

Seafarers can also log in their work and rest hours, and if they feel stressed or unwell there is a live SOS Welfare@Sea function which provides immediate access to the Seafarers Help Live Chat, which is free, confidential and available 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.

In addition, the APP connects with global seafarer charity Stella Maris and enables seafarers to find contact details for the organisation's chaplains in 54 countries around the world, with functionality to connect and make appointments pre-arrival, providing links to local port services and marine traffic to track voyage progress.

Crew Matters also tackles the problem of storing seafarer documentation in one place with reminder settings for crew endorsements and certificate expiry dates.

It provides a link to trade union Nautilus, with details of membership, news, careers and tax advice, training opportunities, as well as containing a wealth of information from the IOM ship registry including the master's handbook, shipping notices, IOMSR news feeds and contact details.

Crew Matters is free to use for seafarers on Isle of Man registered vessels. The App has recently been refreshed and has a new look and a slicker feel, new content is currently being considered, but at its very heart this will remain a Crew welfare App.

How does the Isle of Man Ship Registry deal with any issues involving the welfare of crew or problems with the vessels?

The Isle of Man Ship Registry has a robust Maritime Labour Convention Complaints process and procedure which we encourage all crew to use should they have any complaints regarding welfare onboard.

The complaint form can be found on our [website](#) and the dedicated email is: MarineMLC.DfE@gov.im

For any technical problems with vessels we have a dedicated email account: MarineSurvey.DfE@gov.im which is monitored by one of our Principal Surveyors.

For out of hours we have a dedicated emergencies only number +44 (0)7624 493467 and a full list of [contact numbers and emails](#) can be found on our website.

The Ship Registry prides itself on being available whenever our clients need us.

The Isle of Man Ship Registry continues to be a proactive and innovative flag state. In fact, it has been a flag state of many 'firsts' over the last couple of years – the first to join getting to zero coalition, the first to launch seafarer welfare app, the first to carry out and approve the periodical remote survey of a ship, the first to broadcast mass to crew, the first to accept modification to use LPG as fuel for older gas tankers and the first to offer a comprehensive list of discounted fees for ships using green technology... so what's next?

At the Isle of Man Ship Registry we strive to be different and offer different services and solutions to our international client base.

The most recent changes to service delivery are around providing 'consultancy services' on innovation and design projects where our in house technical expertise can assist our clients or third parties.

Consultancy services allow our clients the confidence of early flag involvement in any innovation or design project be that from testing the policy or legislative framework or providing technical expertise.

Our consultancy services are already in use and we have signed several NDA's on innovative design solutions where we are working with the maritime industry to deliver a cleaner, greener and more sustainable maritime future. ■