

EMIRATES SHIPPING CONGRESS AND IEC TELECOM DRIVE MARITIME DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AT UAE MARITIME WEEK

07 May 2025, Dubai, UAE: [IEC Telecom](#) took the lead in accelerating maritime digitalisation in the GCC at the Emirates Shipping Congress, held on the opening day of UAE Maritime Week and organised by [Emirates Shipping Association](#). A leading international satcom solutions provider co-curated a high-impact session in collaboration with the Association to spotlight the latest advancements in marine communications.

The UAE's 2030 vision for digital transformation in the maritime industry includes technologies such as IoT, big data analytics, AI and real-time fleet management, with satellite telecommunication being the backbone of this process. In this evolving landscape, the effective management of onboard network assets has become increasingly critical.

"Connectivity is no longer a luxury but a fundamental utility, driving a new era of maritime innovation," **stated Nabil Ben Soussia, Group Chief Commercial Officer at IEC Telecom**, addressing delegates of the Emirates Shipping Congress at "Navigating the Digital Seas: Maritime Transformation Powered by Satcom" panel discussion.

With high-speed LEO technology—pioneered by Starlink—the latest digital technologies are becoming increasingly available on board. According to the 2024 progress report, 75,000 vessels were connected to the network last year and this number continues to soar. That said, maritime connectivity is very complex and is subject to service availability, weather conditions and local regulations.

"No single vessel operates over a single network, particularly in the GCC. Typically, vessels would leverage LEO for international shipping routes, regional GEO operators for internal waters and GSM close to the shore. Each network has different access protocols and a range of applications, adapted to different bandwidths," **explained Nabil Ben Soussia, Group CCO, IEC Telecom Group**.

Considering the complexity of modern marine communications, network management is essential to ensure operational efficiency and agility on board. Advanced network management platforms like IEC Telecom's OptiView are designed to help operators maximise user experience over each network. It also paves way to improved resource management, allowing fleet managers to activate or deactivate lines, reallocating airtime across the fleet as situation demands to ensure every megabyte is used strategically.

"We may not be able to teleport crew or cargo, but we can maximise digital infrastructure to stay agile and efficient," - as co-lead of the session, Mr. Ben Soussia highlighted how evolving network engineering trends aim to boost both operational efficiency and cost optimisation. He noted that since 2019, the maritime sector has faced significant challenges—from global cataclysms and geopolitical shifts, fluctuating demand caused by sanctions and shifting trade policies to rerouted shipping lanes away from conflict zones and pandemic-related port closures. In this dynamic landscape, agility and cost-efficiency are now essential for vessel operators to stay competitive.

The latest version of OptiView was unveiled last month at Singapore Maritime Week. Mr. Ben Soussia announced that the service is now available globally, with GCC customers first in line for migration.

As part of Emirates Shipping Association's ongoing efforts to support innovation, digital resilience, and member education, the Congress serves as a strategic forum to spotlight emerging technologies and enable real-world collaboration. "Emirates Shipping Congress was established as a platform for thought leadership and knowledge exchange, designed specifically to serve the evolving needs of the UAE maritime sector," stated **Huma Qureshi, General Manager of Emirates Shipping Association**. "As a new generation of digitally fluent seafarers joins the industry, understanding the operational implications of maritime digitalisation has never been more critical. Today's session offered our members and distinguished guests a clear and practical roadmap for transformation. We extend our sincere thanks to our partners from IEC Telecom for their invaluable insights and collaboration."

The Emirates Shipping Congress emerged as a cornerstone event in the UAE's Maritime Week, offering a vital platform to address regional priorities and global trends. Experts like IEC Telecom help maritime stakeholders navigate the complexities of digital transformation.

The UAE Maritime Week incorporates a very comprehensive calendar of events unfolding in Dubai until 9 May.

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About IEC Telecom Group

IEC Telecom Group is an international satellite service operator with nearly three decades of engineering expertise in voice and data services. The brand's portfolio includes a wide range of satellite products, LEO/GEO/LTE solutions, and value-added services. The Group is on a mission to spread digitalisation at sea for all vessel types. With an in-house network engineering team, IEC Telecom designs bespoke connectivity solutions for projects of any complexity. In addition, with global stock management, the company delivers worldwide. IEC Telecom has offices across nine countries: France, UAE, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Mallorca. For more information, see www.iec-telecom.com.

About Emirates Shipping Association

Emirates Shipping Association represents and advocates for the UAE's maritime cluster. By working closely with industry stakeholders and policymakers, the Association is dedicated to enhancing the UAE's status as a global maritime hub while advancing sustainability and innovation in the sector.