

First-of-its kind retrofit sees Maersk boxship convert to methanol propulsion

October 20, 2023



Brian Voldsgaard speaking at the ceremony / Credit: Zhoushan Xinya Shipbuilding

Maersk is undertaking a symbolic retrofitting of one of its ships to run on methanol, as the Danish shipping giant continues to emphasise its belief in methanol as an alternative fuel.

On 18 October, Maersk and Chinese ship repair yard Zhoushan Xinya Shipbuilding signed the contract for the works in a grand ceremony in Zhoushan, China. It is the first known retrofitting of a conventionally fuelled ship to be methanol dual-fuelled.

Maersk's senior procurement director Brian Voldsgaard, representing the Danish group, signed the contract with Xinya's general manager, Xia Songkang.

The contract signing follows a visit to Xinya, made by a delegation headed by Voldsgaard in April.

MAN Energy Solutions' China service general manager Martin Lyager Hansen also attended the signing ceremony. The engine maker is working with Maersk on retrofitting projects to enable more of the Danish group's ships to operate on green methanol.

Maersk has commissioned 19 methanol-propelled container ships at various shipyards, and more newbuildings are in the pipeline.

The name of the ship to be retrofitted by Xinya has not been disclosed. Sister vessels will be modified when they are due for special surveys.

Maersk, which wants to achieve carbon neutrality in 2040, a decade before the global target of 2050, has pledged that 25% of its container volumes will be carried using green fuels by 2030.

Voldsgaard said, "As a leader in the global shipping and logistics industry, Maersk has the responsibility to set a new benchmark for decarbonisation and emission reduction in the global shipping industry."

"The signing of the world's first container ship methanol dual-fuel conversion project will further help Maersk achieve its 2040 net-zero emissions goal."

Xinya expects rising demand for green fuels to result in more retrofitting jobs for shipyards.

The shipyard said, "Dual-fuel modification of ships is currently the focus of the industry and has huge market potential for the ship repair industry."

Martina Li
Asia Correspondent