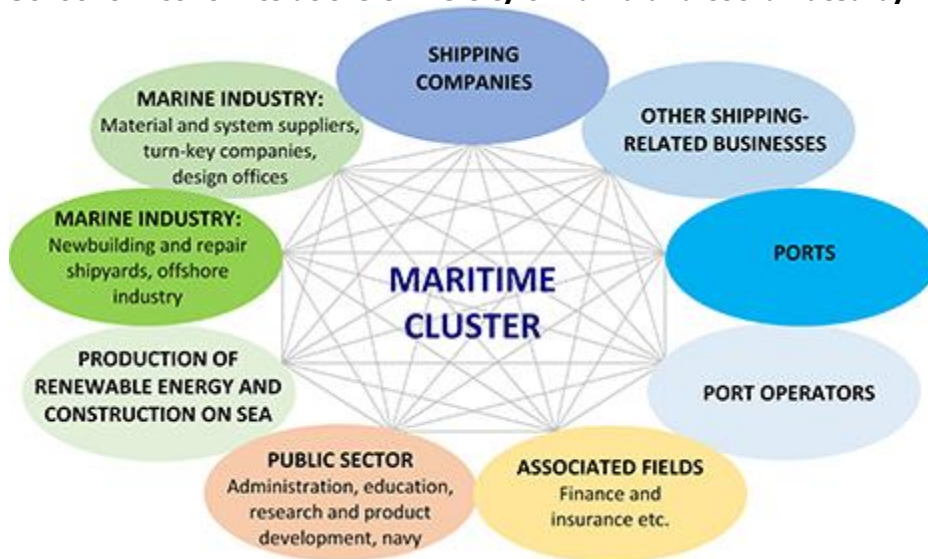


The Finnish Maritime Cluster has Good Views towards the Year 2020

The Finnish maritime cluster is an entity which is formed by numerous maritime businesses and organisations. The core of the maritime cluster consists of marine industries, shipping and shipping related businesses as well as port functions (ports and port operators). A new study called Finnish Maritime Cluster 2020 has been carried out by the Brahea Centre and the Turku School of Economics at the University of Turku and coordinated by Meriliitto.



There are about 3,000 companies in the Finnish maritime cluster, but many of them are very small ones. Therefore, the economic figures in the study cover about 1,500 limited companies. According to the financial statement figures of 2014, the combined turnover of the Finnish maritime cluster is 12.7 billion euro. The share of marine industries is 7.9 billion euro, shipping businesses 3.3 billion euro and port functions 1.3 billion euro. The maritime cluster employs 48,400 persons in activities directly related to the maritime sector. The value added to the national economy was 3.8 billion euro.

The views vary a lot between sectors and also between individual companies. All fields of businesses in the maritime cluster are traditionally very sensitive to economic fluctuations. Changes in the global economy have direct impacts on the need of sea transports, and about 40% of the value formation in the Finnish maritime cluster depends on the flows of cargo transports. In general, however, the outlook is positive. There are also some new promising spearhead companies in the new Blue Growth sector. Only about one sixth of the companies in the cluster have reduced their business in the maritime sector while a bigger share have expanded in the sector.

There are diverse innovation activities going on in the maritime cluster: products, processes, concepts, services and experience productions. The dynamics of innovation have changed a lot. First the shipyards made everything by themselves, then they transformed into incubators and now the success and innovativeness in the maritime cluster companies is based on visionary individuals and operating cultures

which are open to changes in organizations and networks. More and more new innovations in the cluster are made by start-up companies.

The Finnish marine industry is still a strong growth industry with environmentally friendly and energy-efficient solutions. Masters of Science in marine technology are needed by design offices and software providers. There is also a lack of project management experts; wide knowledge concerning mechanical engineering, ICT, design, programming and logistics is needed.

In the shipping business the outlook is mainly positive. Shipping companies are satisfied with the Finnish business policy on shipping and the arrangements which improved their competitiveness (tonnage tax, labour cost recovery system and agreement on a mixed crew manning model), but they worry about the stability of the policy and organization. They also expect solutions to the problems with financial guarantees in the investment projects of especially the smaller shipping companies. The development of freight prices in shortsea shipping is slightly positive.

In the visible future, the development of cargo tons in Finnish ports will most probably not see a return to the constant growth it had before year 2008. The development of general economy impacts directly on cargo tons and reflects on the profitability and investment capability of ports and port operators. Transit traffic to and from Russia seems to fade out, too. However, there are significant investment plans in the ports up to the year 2020 which can be seen as a sign of a better outlook.

The future of the Finnish maritime cluster rests heavily on specialisation, competence and know-how. Therefore, it is highly important that enough resources are allocated to the education system in order to provide skilled labour to all different work tasks of the maritime cluster.

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