

Ballast water management risk assessment for exemptions

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Requirements to address the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens with ballast water were set by the 2004 International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention). The BWM Convention includes provisions that vessels on certain routes may be exempted from BWM requirements provided this is based on solid risk assessment (RA). RA has to be conducted according to the International Maritime Organisation Guidelines for Risk Assessment under Regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention (G7 Guidelines). As the BWM Convention is nearing its entry into force, vessels have to comply with requirements thereby triggering an interest to conduct RA for exemptions. This contribution presents an exemptions RA model for intra-Baltic shipping based on BWM Convention, G7 Guidelines as an elementary framework and further noting the regionally agreed Helsinki Commission RA guidance for exemptions. We present the RA methods and elements that were selected for the application of ballast water management exemptions in intra-Baltic shipping. This is worldwide the first RA model for ballast water management exemptions according to the BWM Convention. The current lack of reliable biological information (including human pathogens) present the ballast water donor and recipient areas were identified as the most limiting factor to conduct RA. However, this study may be of particular interest for regional seas with similar RA relevant features as in the Baltic Sea, such as an intensive shipping pattern and different salinities throughout the sea.