



**U.S. Center for
Maritime Innovation**

U.S. Center for Maritime Innovation (USCMI)

Overview Presentation and Engagement
Session at AWO Safety Meeting (August 2025)

Mission Scope of the USCM

- National resource for research, development, and demonstration projects supporting maritime innovation in a range of potential subject areas
- Includes interest in all types of vessel, port/port facility, and other marine transportation issues
- Primarily focused on US maritime issues as well as associated international maritime interconnections
- Coverage of the diverse issues of interest in different geographical regions of the country
- Accessible for funding from MARAD, other agencies, and even private funding of projects



**Maritime
Energy**



**Maritime
Operations**



**U.S. Maritime
Competitiveness**



**Maritime
Resilience**



Current & Upcoming Activities

Completed

- Cooperating Agreement and Kickoff
- Initial Research Partner & Stakeholder meetings
- Initial Meetings with Consultative Panels
- Numerous Presentations & Engagement Session on Behalf of the USCMI
- Working Group Definitions and SME Partner Outreach
- Standard Operating Principles (SPS)
- Preliminary Strategic Research Priorities (SRP)
- Administration Alignment Pause & Adjustment
- Public Facing Website
- Launch of Initial Project Funded by ABS for Inland Waterway Maritime Fuels/Power with Vanderbilt University
- Preliminary Research Project Portfolio

Current

- Registering Members for Technical and Regional Working Groups
- Planning for Convening Initial Working Group Meeting (Phased Approach)
- Finalizing Initial Research Project Portfolio & Execution Strategy
- Discussions with Third-parties on Joint Project Opportunities with the USCMI (co-funded work)
- Ongoing Presentation & Engagement Sessions to Grow the USCMI Research Partner and Stakeholder Coalition
- Positioning USCMI for Key Roles Associated with U.S. Maritime Policy

Upcoming

- Convening and Managing Engagement of Working Groups
 - Technical working groups
 - Regional working groups
 - Consultative panels
- Initial Research Project Portfolio Execution
- Ongoing Presentation & Engagement Sessions to Grow the USCMI Research Partner and Stakeholder Coalition
- Securing Additional Funding for USCMI Research Projects



USCMI Website & Working Group Enrollment

[Website: www.uscmi.org](http://www.uscmi.org)



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🔊 USCMI Technical Working Groups Kicking Off Soon. [Join here](#)

Welcome

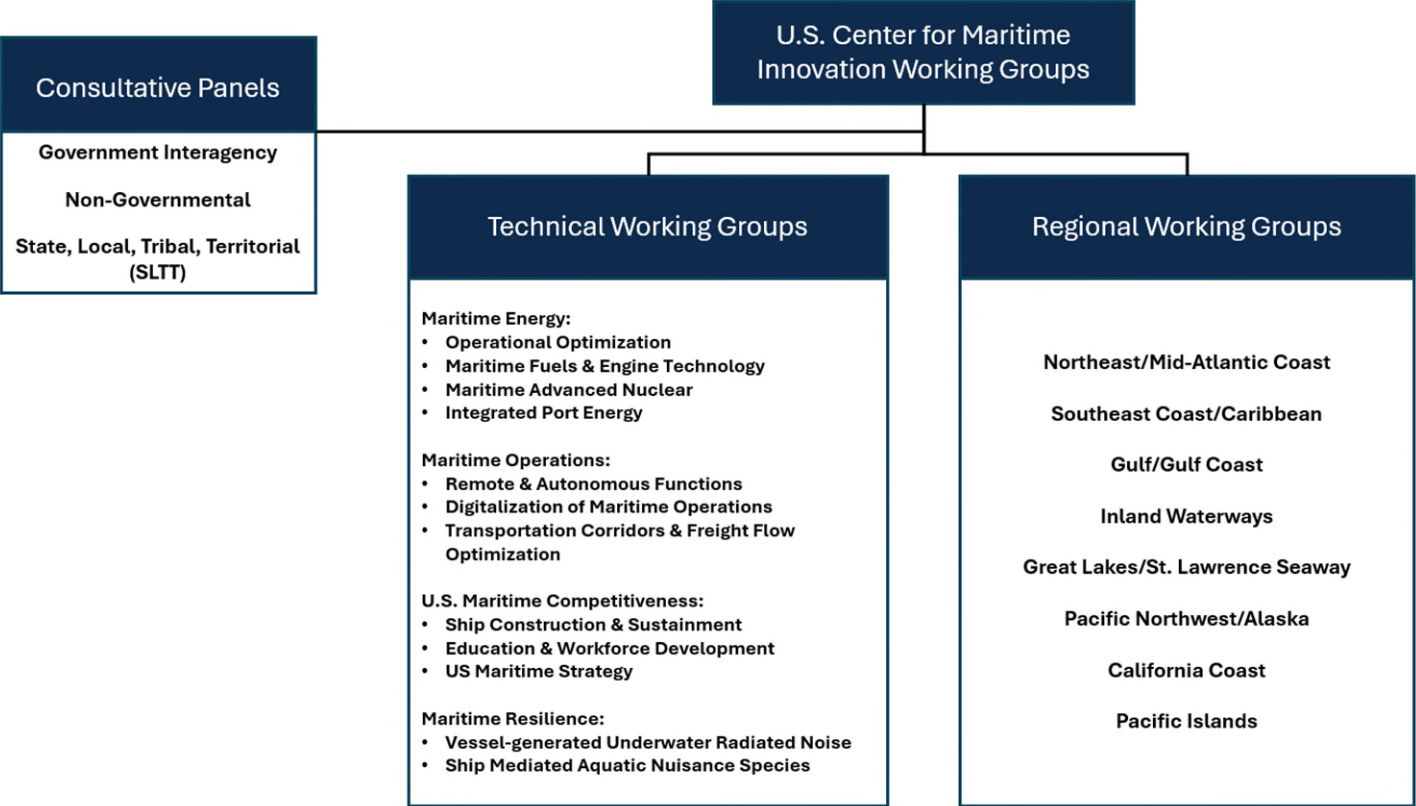
U.S. Center for Maritime Innovation

Authorized by the U.S. Congress, the Center is intended to support the study, research, development, assessment, and deployment of emerging marine technologies and practices related to the U.S. maritime transportation system (MTS)

[Learn more](#)



USCMI Working Groups & Panels



Working Group Name	8/4/2025
Operational Optimization	144
Maritime Advanced Nuclear	104
Integrated Port Energy	124
Maritime Fuels and Engine Technology	144
Vessel-generated Underwater Radiated Noise	73
Ship Mediated Aquatic Nuisance Species	46
Marine Transportation System Risks	116
Remote & Autonomous Functions	112
Digitalization of Maritime Operations	134
Transportation Corridors & Freight Flow Optimization	115
Ship construction and Sustainment	133
Education & Workforce Development	151
U.S. Maritime Strategy	176
Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Coast	107
South Coast/Caribbean	62
Gulf/Gulf Coast	92
Inland Waterways	65
Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway	65
Pacific Northwest/Alaska	94
California Coast	87
Pacific Islands	52
General News and Updates	292



USCMI Funding

- Current funding is \$4.2M for startup of the USCMI
 - No more than \$500k for administrative operations
 - At least \$3.7M for technical research work
- MARAD will apply incremental funding from annual META and/or other program budgets as determined most appropriate
- Potential for directed additional appropriations for the USCMI in Congressional annual funding bills and other legislations (e.g., the SHIPS for America bill with Sen. Kelly/Rep. Waltz)
- Other agencies will be able to leverage the USCMI to support projects of interest and bring additional funding to the USCMI
- Other sources of non-governmental funding may be leveraged to work with public-private partnerships that fund USCMI work

Potential Funding Sources
Increased Appropriations: U.S. Maritime Strategy is a high priority at this time. Interest in funding programs to strengthen U.S. maritime interests, capitalize on major industry transformation trends to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding, and innovate for greater competitiveness of U.S. shipping companies is creating significant interest in the USCMI (or other types of Centers of Excellence).
Federal Interagency Funding: Federal agencies outside of MARAD have substantial funding and interests around energy trends in the maritime domain, marine environmental issues, and other types of maritime competitiveness issues. Other agencies (DOE, USCG, DOS, EPA, U.S. Navy, and other components of DOT) have expressed interest in how they may be able to leverage the USCMI to accomplish their objectives. Interagency funds transfers to MARAD for support from the USCMI are important funding sources.
U.S. Research Funding: Organizations like the National Science Foundation and the Gulf Research Program under the National Academies of Science fund maritime-related projects, especially around maritime energy programs as well as other research topics. The USCMI could receive key funding for collaborative programs between MARAD and these programs.
State, Territorial, Local, or Tribal Funding: As noted previously, non-federal government partners often have funding for projects that the USCMI could perform. Whether part of joint funding with federal agencies or completely funded at the state, territorial, local, or tribal level, this funding source can enhance the overall funding for research conducted by the USCMI.
International Collaboration Funding: The U.S. is a party to a number of international initiatives, coalitions, and other collaborations that have international funding. Full or contributory funding from these sources could support projects.
Private Philanthropic Funding: A number of stakeholders have inquired about whether the USCMI may be able to leverage private philanthropic funding. Some of the organizations that are contributing to maritime research.
Industry Co-Funding of Work: Industry may co-fund projects (or at least provide in-kind support) for projects to enhance their scope/scale, especially around potentially larger demonstration and testing projects.
Unfunded Joint Industry Projects (JIP): JIP projects in which the major parties all contribute funds and/or in-kind effort to tackle important projects of mutual interest may be executed through the USCMI.

A key goal for the USCMI is to develop sustainable funding streams at a scale that support a broad research agenda suitable for driving major innovations in the industry



Inputs to Research Priorities

The USCMCI presents a unique opportunity to help build research priority alignment among government agencies and with industry, academia, and other stakeholders to best advance the interests of a safer, more secure, and competitive MTS.

- MARAD META Priorities
- USCMCI Working Groups & Panels
- Broader Stakeholder Engagement
- Secretariat Input
- Priorities Identified or Expressed by Other Organizations

The USCMCI provides the collaborative forum to approach research in a new way – not just issuing competitive grants/contracts for project execution, but rather formulating collaborative teams that bring together many stakeholders in new ways. There are many specific technical challenges to address, but the fundamental challenge is changing the approach to maritime innovation.

The USCMCI also serves as a clearinghouse for maritime innovation research and best practices.

-- USCMCI SRP Document



Setting Research Priorities

Research Priority Decision Factors

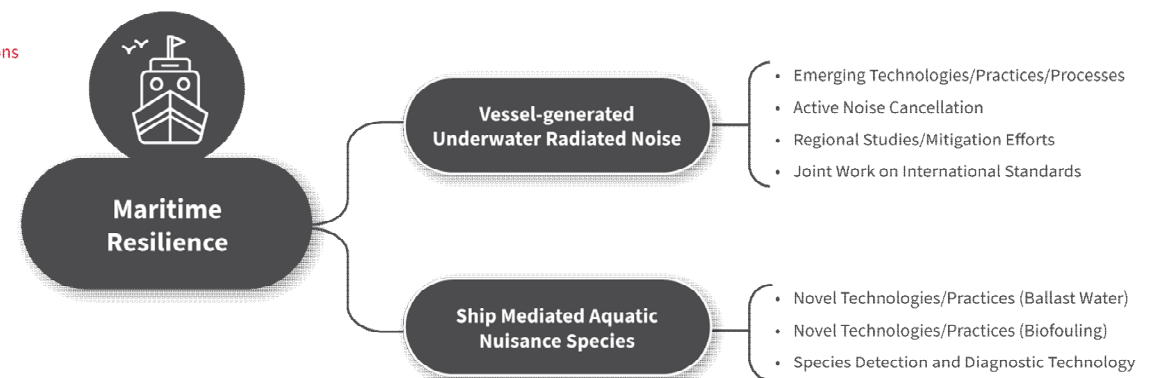
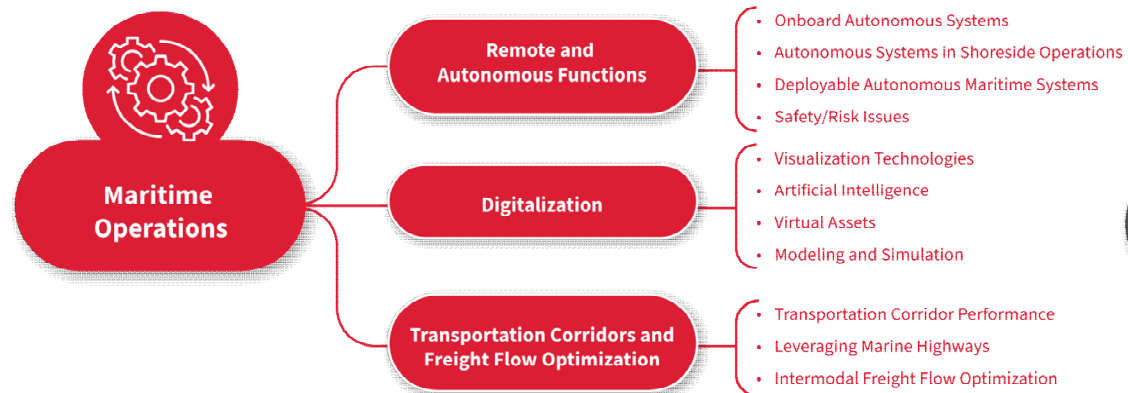
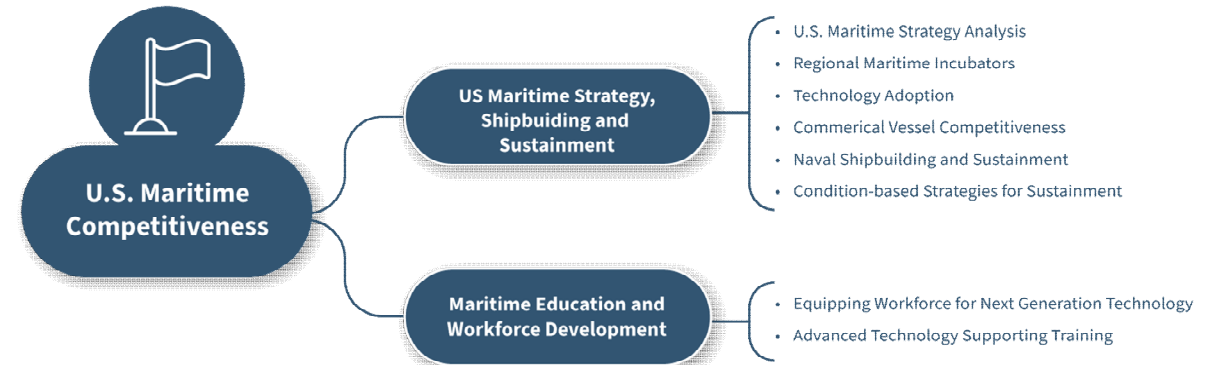
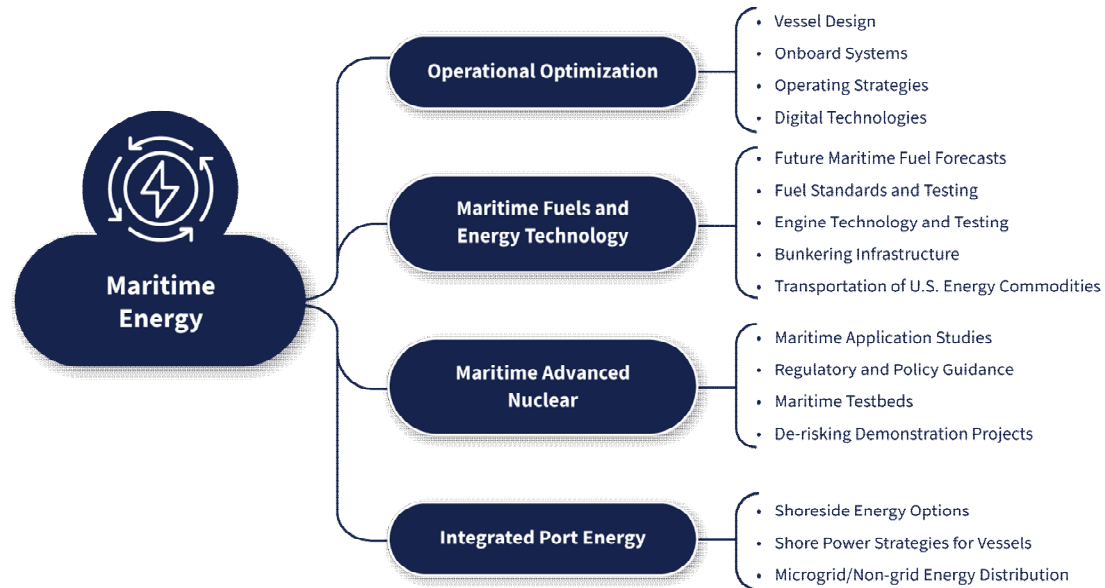
- Alignment with the stated USCMCI strategic priorities and research agenda
- Alignment with other national plans/priorities (Administration, Congress, other agencies, etc.)
- Project specific funding availability (such as sponsorship from other agencies or public-private partnership sponsorship)
- Continuation/extension of long-term, high priority initiatives
- Project mix (not just focused on one technical or geographic domain)
- Value proposition of the project for the MTS community
- Compelling public/community impacts
- Ability to fit within available funding constraints

Areas of Emphasis

- Critical evaluation of current state of knowledge, technology, and operating practices in the marine industry to produce best available practice guidance and information clearinghouses/data sets that provide trusted information to decision makers across the industry
- Transition of promising technology solutions at low Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) to higher TRLs via technology demonstrations and evaluations
- Performance evaluation and/or verification and validation of technology solutions (at various stages of development and testing)
- Early-stage maritime innovation projects
- Innovation in maritime education and workforce development to keep up with changing technologies and the needs of the future workforce
- Specialized technical analysis and evaluation to support major transformational initiatives in the maritime domain



Preliminary Research Interests





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