

25 April 2024

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Publication date: 14 July 2021

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ISSN: 0964-8496

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Methanol: Red herring or real bunkering solution?

As the global maritime industry considers its options when it comes to reducing its emissions, methanol, a colourless alcohol widely used in the chemicals industry, is increasingly seen as a potential alternative bunker fuel to oil-based ones, alongside liquid hydrogen and ammonia.

Unlike its two alternative competitors, methanol does not need to be liquefied or stored in very cold temperatures, is more readily available and has a higher energy density, but it produces CO₂ and, compared to LNG as bunker fuel, is less effective in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

While sustainably produced methanol, either in the form of green methanol or biomethanol, could boost the fuel's bid to help decarbonise shipping, it remains a costly solution, which will only be able to find its place in a multi-fuel bunkering future once its business case becomes more financially viable.

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