



AMSCC

Athens Multinational Sealift Coordination Center

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MULTINATIONAL SEALIFT COORDINATION CENTER ATHENS

Who we are

The Multinational Sealift Coordination Center, Athens (AMSCC) was established by the Hellenic Ministry of Defense (HMOD) in the year 2004. The main purpose of the AMSCC is to act as specialist intermediary between Countries or International Institutions and sealift providers to arrange cost effective ocean transport services, on behalf of its users¹. As a multinational non-profit entity, the AMSCC is focused on locating free of charge sealift solutions for its users by utilizing shipping industry stakeholders in a timely and efficient manner.

The AMSCC is being supported by the Hellenic Chamber of Shipping (HCS), the Hellenic Shipbrokers Association (HSA) and other legal and insurance subject matter experts.

Mission

The mission of the AMSCC is to provide cost effective sealift solutions in accordance with the terms of agreements signed between the users and the HMOD. Each one of the users is entitled to receive customized sealift services as provided for by the terms of respective bilateral agreement².

Values

The following list of guiding principles define the way the AMSCC conducts business with both users and shipping industry stakeholders.

Trust: Honoring relationships, both old and new.

Flexibility: Tailoring sealift services according to our users' needs.

Confidence: Providing peace of mind to our users.

Integrity: Conducting business according to a strict code of ethics.

AMSCC Users

Up today, the following users have signed bilateral agreements with HMOD: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, NATO SHAPE, European Defense Agency (EDA) and EU ATHENA Financial Mechanism.

Organizational Structure

Main feature of the AMSCC organizational structure is a balanced vertical and horizontal complexity designed to support main functions and through this the mission itself. A functional approach permits jobs to be grouped in departments that bring together personnel with the same specialty ensuring at the same time the unification of effort. A number of AMSCC billets have been covered by personnel of the country-users.

In order to ensure appropriate information security, the AMSCC is operating IAW NATO standard security protocols, permitting info sharing among users, in the domain of confidential communications.

¹ The term "users" refers to countries and international institutions that have signed bilateral agreement with the HMOD.

² It is worth noting that humanitarian assistance requests take absolute priority over any other request in accordance with HMOD guidelines.



Total Quality Management

AMSCC has adopted Total Quality Management (TQM) practices in order to provide its users high quality shipping services. TQM is considered as an asset for AMSCC, since it secures a new way of thinking about management and a comprehensive way to improve total organizational performance and quality.

In 2012 the Center was organized in accordance with ISO standard 9001:2008 certified by Hellenic Lloyd's SA (LRQA) and since 2017 new procedures have been followed in accordance with ISO standard 9001:2015 certified by Hellenic Lloyd's SA (LRQA).

What we are doing

Market overview by collecting critical shipping market information in order to be able to provide users with market intelligence and advice. It is vital to scout the volatile spot³ market for trends. While the future can never be predicted with absolute certainty, present understanding of market trends, allows experts to estimate on how important indicators like freight rate, or tonnage⁴ availability may be moving in the near future. AMSCC staff supported by HCS and HSA experts provide their professional insight on interpreting trends and locating opportunities for users.

Therefore, the role of market overview is crucial for two main reasons. Firstly, users have the opportunity to obtain a broad idea on how the shipping industry can support future transport operations, in terms of type of charter⁵, vessels availability and transportation cost. Secondly, critical updated information regarding the shipping market will definitely assists the development of a comprehensive Tender or Request for Proposal (RFP) in the context of a sealift bidding, that the AMSCC initiates after being requested by a user.

Another important part of the market overview is the monitoring of sea transport standards and regulations introduced by the International Maritime Organization. It is worth mentioning also that the AMSCC apart from sealift, supports also full range of multi-modal transport services on a case by case basis as applicable to users' needs. Multi-modal transport involves sea, land and air modes of transport and of course interconnections within modes.

Bidding facilitation by undertaking the responsibility of sealift bidding procedures upon users request. In that case, the AMSCC initiates a bidding process in accordance with the EU Procurement Directive and the Hellenic Republic procurement legislation. In general, the six stages of a typical bidding process are as follows:

- Tender or Request for Proposal (RFP),
- Tender Publication,
- Bids Reception and Evaluation,
- Recommended Bid Announcement,
- Bid accepted or rejected by the user,
- Contract Implementation.

The aforementioned process shows that the user retains the option to accept or reject the bid recommended by the AMSCC. In case of acceptance of the recommended bid, the shipping service provider is called upon to implement the sealift project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract. In case of rejection, the process stops with no other obligation from the user's side. Again, throughout the aforementioned process, the AMSCC is supported actively by HCE and HSA experts in order to make sure that the user is going to receive the best possible sealift solution. Bidding facilitation includes also support to

³ Spot market: Short term contracts for voyage, trip or short-term time charters, normally no longer than three months in duration.

⁴ Tonnage: Vessels that carry any type of cargo.

⁵ Charter or Charter-party: The nautical term for an agreement or contract made between a shipping service provider and a second party who wishes to use its vessel.



preparation of the two most important documents of sealift transportation, the Charter Party and the Bill of Lading⁶.

Monitoring of the chartered vessel till the completion of the transportation is conducted in cooperation with the competent shipping service provider and by employment of IT means. AMSCC keeps user informed on the vessels' track while they are underway.

Liaison officer provision by AMSCC if requested by users to support any sea or multi-modal lift operation.

How it works

The bilateral agreement between any user and the HMOD includes terms describing in detail the process which AMSCC and the user need to walk through towards sealift services procurement. This process complies with the ISO 2001/2015 and is broadly as follows:

Step 1: Check⁷ the AMSCC users' login page to access the AMSCC Data Base, <https://www.amsc.com.gr> to start a basic research.

Users, by signing in the Data Base, they have access to AMSCC portfolio of shipping companies and shipbroker offices that have already signed Letters of Intent (LOI) with the AMSCC. LOIs usually function as not finalized contracts declaring that the two parties have already agreed on a number of terms, leaving out terms such as the route, or the cargo or the cost. Those terms will be determined later, upon an actual user's sealift request. However, an initial sealift cost per ton of cargo or cost per day may be included in the LOIs, being updated periodically.

In addition to that, users are able to view plenty of listed LOI vessels, their technical characteristics, pictures and trading areas⁸.

Step 1 ends when the user has been aware of Data Base sealift information.

Step 2: Contact the AMSCC to receive advise on a possible sealift request.

In that case the user needs to reach out the AMSCC in order for a line of communication to be established. AMSCC staff will try to make sure that user's expectations and thoughts, will be taken into consideration. Discussion and collaboration between the two parties will conclude with an initial estimate on cost effective sealift solutions available at that time. It should be noted that sealift solutions may not require a vessel to be chartered, but simply part of the loading capacity of a liner ship⁹.

Step 2 ends when the user has received sealift advise.

Step 3: Fill in a sealift request form to get the bidding and contracting process started.

Upon user's decision for a bidding process initiation, a sealift request needs to be filled out and submitted to the AMSCC. Then a bidding process will get started on the user's behalf. In the end the AMSCC will announce the recommended bid and offer a draft of contract or charter party.

Step 3 ends when the AMSCC has announced the recommended sealift bid and offer a contract draft.

Step 4: User signs or rejects the contract.

⁶ Bill of Lading: A document issued by the carrier to acknowledge receipt of cargo for shipment.

⁷ AMSCC login page is restricted to AMSCC partners only. Non-partners may initiate by step 2.

⁸ Trading Area: A geographic location wherein a vessel does business.

⁹ Liner Ships: Mostly Container ships or Roll on-Roll off ships operating in liner services.



The user has the option to accept or reject the bid and similarly to sign or reject the draft of contract or charter party. In the case of the user accepts the bid, then the proposed contract or a charter party will need to be signed between the user and the sealift provider.

Step 4 ends when the user and the sealift provider have signed the contract.

Step 5: Receive update reports by AMSCC staff throughout Contract Implementation stage up to contract termination.

The AMSCC manages and monitors the execution of the contract according to the needs of the requested user.

Step 5 ends when the sealift service has been provided as agreed and contract is terminated.

Advantages

1. All AMSCC services are provided free of charge.
2. Access to the AMSCC Data Base, helps users to check out first hand updated sealift information and acquire a broad idea on sealift opportunities available.
3. Prominent institution of the Hellenic shipping industry such as the HCA and HSA along with legal and insurance subject matter experts support the AMSCC for users benefit.

Challenges

1. **Freight rates volatility.** AMSCC is working on addressing the volatility of freight rates by agreeing on preplanned sealift packages with shipping community within reasonable cost range per trading area for the benefit of the users. Freight rates are changing almost on a daily basis depending on a number of geopolitical, economical or commercial factors. For that reason, it is key for the AMSCC, on the one hand to maintain awareness on how the freight rates are fluctuating in order to be able to negotiate future transportation costs and on the other hand to try to bind sealift providers on reasonable cost range.

2. **Vessels availability.** The competition among shipping companies operating vessels in spot market and the demand and supply of sealift services, may influence enormously the vessel availability on particular routes. AMSCC is working hard on spot market responsiveness in terms of vessels availability, by making framework agreements with shipping service providers.

3. **Multi Modal Lift.** Even though AMSCC is mainly a sealift service provider specialized personnel on land and air transportation are working on putting together multi modal transportation packages.

Missions Accomplished

Indicative missions accomplished by AMSCC:

1. Sealift of 81 tanks from Koper, Slovenia and 36 BMP-1 from Souda Bay, Greece to Kuwait (2005).
2. Evacuation of American citizens from Lebanon (2006).
3. Sealift of Polish Contingent from Szczecin, Poland to Duala, Cameroon in the context of EU supporting the UN operation MINURCAT (2008).
4. Cooperation with the EUMS and NATO/AMCC to support evacuation operations from Libya (2011).