

Hamburg
01—04
Sept 2026



Press Release · Pressemitteilung

Maritime Innovation of Tomorrow: Start-ups@SMM Bring Fresh Ideas to SMM 2026

From AI to Robotics: 19 Young Companies Showcase World Premieres and Innovations for the Maritime Industry

Hamburg, 4 August 2026 – SMM is not only a showcase for established technologies but also a stage for the innovations of tomorrow. Through **Start-ups@SMM**, the world's leading maritime trade fair once again puts young companies and their developments centre stage. From 1 to 4 September, international founders will demonstrate in Hamburg how new technologies are transforming the maritime industry.

"Many of the technologies that will shape the maritime industry in the years ahead are being developed by young companies today. With Start-ups@SMM, we make this innovative strength visible and provide entrepreneurs and developers with an international platform. The innovations on display demonstrate how new ideas become market-ready solutions – including several world premieres," says **Claus Ulrich Selbach**, Vice President Exhibitions Maritime & Energy at Hamburg Messe und Congress.

World Premieres and New Technologies

A total of 19 young companies are taking part in Start-ups@SMM. Coming from Germany, across Europe, Canada and Asia, they demonstrate the diversity and innovative strength of the maritime start-up ecosystem. Their innovations focus on artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous systems, digital analytics as well as technologies for greater energy efficiency and sustainability. Four companies illustrate the breadth of innovation on display.

Agen Robotics from Türkiye will present Micro Panel Line, a robotic system for the automated assembly and welding of steel structures in shipbuilding. The system processes digital design data and helps shipyards make manufacturing processes more efficient, precise and productive.

Several start-ups will celebrate **world premieres** at SMM. German company **FrekiLabs** will unveil accel::lbm, a simulation software that significantly accelerates digital ship design by calculating flow behaviour and hull resistance much faster than conventional methods. **MarinaChain** from South Korea will introduce MarinaValue, an AI-powered platform that combines market, vessel and operational data to support shipowners and investors with fleet valuations and investment decisions.

The Slovak company **Bencros** will also present a world premiere: marine fenders made from carbon-negative recycled rubber. Its innovative manufacturing process enables certified carbon inset credits to be issued with every fender supplied, contributing to the decarbonisation of maritime infrastructure.

Other participating start-ups are developing autonomous vessel systems, AI-supported bridge assistance, water treatment technologies, data-driven fleet analytics and emission-free propulsion concepts. Together, the Start-ups@SMM demonstrate the breadth of innovation emerging from today's maritime start-up community.

Start-ups from Around the World

The start-ups are located in **two joint exhibition areas** in **Halls A3** and **B6**. The Start-up Route guides visitors directly to the participating companies across both exhibition areas.

Young technology companies are also represented in the **Naval Hall (Hall B8)**, the dedicated exhibition area for **Maritime Security & Defence**. The German company **Salvor Marine Intelligence** will present the world premiere of ASSIST, a modular drone system that supports search and rescue operations at sea through autonomous flight capabilities, AI-assisted mission planning and rescue payload deployment. The exhibition is complemented by Norwegian start-up **Zeabuz**, which develops autonomous technologies for maritime applications.

Maritime Start-up Day & Night: Pitches, Award and Networking

The highlight of the programme is the **Maritime Start-up Day & Night** on Wednesday, 2 September, organised together with **Maritime Startups Germany e.V.** During the event, participating companies will present their innovations in short pitches before an expert jury and the SMM audience. The winning presentation will be honoured as the "**Best Maritime Start-up 2026**" during the SMM Maritime Start-up Night. The evening networking event, held at Karoline, directly next to the exhibition grounds, will bring together start-ups, industry representatives, investors and media over food, drinks and live music. Tickets are available via the SMM ticket shop: [SMM | Tickets & invitations - SMM](#)

Innovation with Market Potential

Start-ups@SMM gives young companies the opportunity to present their developments to an international professional audience and engage with potential customers, partners and investors at an early stage. At the same time, visitors gain valuable insights into technologies and business models that are likely to shape the maritime industry in the years ahead.

Further information: [SMM | Start-ups@SMM - SMM](#)

About SMM

SMM – the world’s leading maritime industry event – will take place from 1 to 4 September 2026 in Hamburg. Under the guiding theme “Driving the Maritime Transition”, it brings together international stakeholders from across the maritime industry to discuss key future topics and actively shape the development of the sector. More than 2,200 exhibiting companies from around 60 countries and approximately 50,000 participants from up to 120 nations are expected. Spanning around 90,000 m² across twelve exhibition halls, SMM showcases the entire value chain of the industry. The focus is on energy efficiency as a key lever of the maritime transition, complemented by maritime security and defence, artificial intelligence, decarbonisation, and digital technologies. SMM serves as a central platform for innovation, international exchange and business development. A comprehensive conference programme accompanies the exhibition, including TradeWinds Shipowners Forum, Maritime Future Summit, gmec – Global Maritime Environmental Congress, MS&D – International Conference & Expo for Maritime Security & Defence and Offshore Dialogue. Running alongside SMM, ALL ABOUT PORTS will launch as a new platform for integrated port solutions. The international conference and accompanying exhibition focus on port infrastructure, terminal technology and port logistics, bringing together port operators, technology providers and investors.

Further information: [SMM – Driving the Maritime Transition | 1–4 September 2026](#)

Supporters of SMM 2026

Main sponsor: DNV

Supporters: VDR, VSM, VDMA, GMT, VDS, CLIA

Conference partners: gmec: Seatrade Maritime News; MS&D: German Maritime Institute (DMI);

Offshore Dialogue: German Association for Marine Technology (GMT); Maritime Future Summit:

HANSA – International Maritime Journal; TradeWinds Shipowners Forum: TradeWinds

About ALL ABOUT PORTS

ALL ABOUT PORTS is an international conference with an accompanying exhibition dedicated to the future of the port industry. The inaugural event will take place on 2–3 September 2026 at the CCH – Congress Center Hamburg and will be held in parallel with SMM – the world’s leading maritime industry event. It positions itself as a new platform for integrated port solutions. The focus is on port infrastructure, terminal technology and port logistics, as well as key topics such as digitalisation, automation, sustainability and security. ALL ABOUT PORTS brings together international stakeholders from the port and logistics industry and fosters exchange on innovation and future-ready port locations.

Further information: www.allaboutports.de

Digital Press Kit

The press release and related images are available for download under the following link. The use of image and video material is only permitted with copyright identification (©Hamburg Messe und Congress/Author). Please refer to the respective image and video information.

[Download Digital Press Kit](#)

Press accreditation

Media representatives can register her:

For SMM 2026: [Press Shop](#)

For ALL ABOUT PORTS: [Press Shop](#)

Press Contact

Nele Bruns

PR Manager

Phone: +49 (0) 40 3569 2439

E-Mail: nele.bruns@hamburg-messe.de

Data Privacy Notice

The data privacy statement of Hamburg Messe und Congress (HMC) can be found under Data Privacy - Hamburg Messe und Congress. The contact details for HMC's data protection officer can also be found there.