Sustainable Cruise Port Accreditation Framework

Pilot Edition



IAPH Technical Committee
Cruise

Sustainable Cruise Port Accreditation Framework

Bronze · Silver · Gold

November 2026

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Introduction

IAPH, via its technical committee on Cruise, is working towards the development of a Sustainable Cruise Port Accreditation Scheme to provide a clear, practical and globally relevant framework for assessing and recognising sustainability maturity across cruise ports. The scheme aims to respond to the need for a consistent approach that can support cruise ports in identifying areas for improvement, demonstrating progress and communicating their sustainability achievements to stakeholders. It is designed around the six key thematic areas of the IAPH World Ports Sustainability Programme (WPSP) and focuses primarily on the operational activities and initiatives of port authorities and cruise destination terminals.

The scheme uses a tiered maturity approach, with each criterion assessed against bronze, silver and gold standards. Bronze represents the establishment of structured sustainability processes and compliance with relevant requirements; Silver reflects the integration of sustainability into operational and strategic decision-making, with measurable performance improvements and stakeholder engagement; and Gold represents industry-leading performance, where sustainability is fully embedded and the port demonstrates innovation, collaboration and positive impact.

This document represents the first version of the scheme's framework, outlining criteria, and respective indicators/requirements. For each of the six WPSP thematic areas – Infrastructure, Digitalization, Climate and Energy, Community Building, Environmental Care, and Health Safety and Security – a set of criteria is established, and respective requirements are formulated in line with the tiered maturity approach.

The framework has been developed collaboratively with Lloyds Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) and IAPH's Cruise Committee, in consultation with industry partners and informed by input from IAPH port members across the six WPSP themes. The next stage will be to share the criteria with cruise ports for further review and practical testing. This pilot phase will help assess whether the criteria are clear, achievable and relevant to different cruise port contexts, and identify where further refinement is required. The scheme will therefore continue to evolve through the pilot and validation process.

As IAPH and the project partners determine the next steps for implementation, the framework will be further developed alongside the full accreditation and audit process, including consideration of independent verification to ensure the credibility and value of the scheme. IAPH's long-term ambition is to establish a robust, practical and continually improving accreditation scheme that can support cruise ports in benchmarking their sustainability maturity and driving continuous improvement.

Climate & Energy

Community Building

Digitalization

Environmental Care

Health, Safety & Security

Infrastructure

Climate & Energy

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
1.1 Energy efficiency – terminal side	Based on the output of at least one energy audit, the cruise port implements basic energy-efficiency measures in cruise terminals and related assets e.g. LED lighting, timers and simple building controls.	The cruise port operates a structured energy management system (for example, aligned with ISO 50001 – energy management standard). Periodic energy audits identify systematic continuous improvement actions. KPIs are set, e.g. % of lighting converted to LED in terminals and key assets, % or areas using timers/simple building controls, kWh per passenger, % of identified audit measures implemented.	The cruise port sets relevant energy efficiency targets and demonstrates respective and measurable energy savings and achievements against these targets. Advanced real-time KPIs prove measurable impact and the port works on continuous optimisation.
1.2 Energy efficiency – vessel side	The cruise port offers incentives and/or takes meaningful actions to reward best performing vessels visiting the port.	The cruise port offers Onshore Power Supply (OPS) at a minimum of one of its berths.	The cruise port offers Onshore Power Supply (OPS) for at least 50% of its cruise calls.
1.3 Energy performance – vessel side	The cruise port offers incentives and/or takes meaningful actions to reward best performing vessels visiting the port.	The cruise port is able to undertake ad-hoc bunkering of low- and zero-carbon fuels upon request.	The cruise port regularly undertakes bunkering of low- and zero-carbon fuels.
1.4 Carbon footprint and carbon neutrality	The cruise port quantifies its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for at least scopes 1 and 2, and sets respective targets to reduce its carbon footprint.	The cruise port quantifies its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for scopes 1 and 2, and at least partly 3, and sets respective targets and pathway to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.	The cruise port quantifies its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for scopes 1, 2 and 3 and sets respective targets and pathway to achieve carbon neutrality by earlier than 2050.
1.5 Renewable energy	At least 20% of the energy consumed on cruise terminals comes from renewable sources.	At least 50% of the energy consumed on cruise terminals comes from renewable sources.	At least 75% of the energy consumed on cruise terminals comes from renewable sources.

Community Building

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
2.1 **Port-city partnership**	The cruise terminal spaces and adjacent areas are occasionally made available for community events (e.g. markets, cultural events, education days), under safe and secure conditions.	The cruise port has a basic programme for off-season and off-peak shared use of cruise areas (waterfront promenades, multi-purpose halls), developed with the municipality and local organisations, with clear rules and scheduling.	Multi-use of cruise-related spaces is part of a broader waterfront and port–city strategy, turning terminals and piers into flexible assets that support cultural, social and economic life beyond cruise peaks.
2.2 **Social license to operate**	The cruise port maintains basic channels for community input related to cruise activity (contact points, complaint mechanism, occasional public information sessions).	A structured community engagement process is in place: regular meetings with neighbourhoods and business associations, surveys on cruise impacts, and transparent follow-up on concerns raised.	Community engagement is institutionalised in long-term port-city governance: formal advisory bodies or committees with community representation, co-creation of certain measures (e.g. traffic, public space, events) and regular public reporting.
2.3 **Local economic impact**	The cruise port encourages local sourcing in terminal concessions and services (e.g. local cafés, shops, tour providers) and provides information on local suppliers to cruise lines and ground handlers.	The cruise port, with the city and tourism board, promotes structured local procurement: incentives or selection criteria for local food and service providers in terminal tenders, and facilitation of links between cruise supply chains and local producers.	Local sourcing and purchasing are embedded in a broader 'local value creation' strategy for cruise, with monitoring of local spend, partnerships with cooperatives or clusters, and alignment with sustainable-food and short-supply-chain initiatives.
2.4 **Local economic impact**	At least one economic impact study of cruise activity has been conducted, quantifying key indicators such as value added, jobs, and passenger/crew expenditure in the port-city region.	Economic impact studies are updated on a regular cycle (e.g. every 3–5 years), using recognised methodologies (e.g. input-output models, surveys) and results are shared with stakeholders to inform resource planning and communication.	Economic impact analysis becomes part of a wider socio-economic assessment: it includes distributional aspects, seasonality and opportunity costs, and is integrated into strategic decision-making on cruise growth, infrastructure and community measures.

Digitalization

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
3.1 Digital efficiency	The cruise port has security cameras linked to a CCTV control centre covering all cruise port areas. Basic digital tools support manual traffic control.	The cruise port has an automatic traffic control system that guides and monitors traffic across terminal operations. Coordination with security checkpoints is in place to harmonize flow during high-volume moments.	The cruise port has an advanced smart traffic control system, e.g. with notifications sent to a control centre in case of anomalies, automatic opening of barriers for arriving traffic based on license plate, AI-driven predictive traffic management using data from sensors, passenger volumes, cruise itineraries, and mobility patterns. The decision-making process should be performed by the AI algorithm.
3.2 Data transparency	The cruise port has a basic daily list of arrivals/departures of cruise lines published manually and publicly available online (listing ETA/ETD and berth locations).	The cruise port has a system connected to a website via API (data interface) for automatic ETA/ETD. This information is contained in a publicly available database that is updated on a weekly basis.	The cruise port has a real-time public platform with ETA/ETD, berth and aggregated passenger volumes data.
3.3 Digital data exchange	Implementation of a Port Community System (PCS) or equivalent digital platform or integrated system is included in the cruise port's strategic plan.	Port Community System (PCS) or equivalent digital platform or integrated system is in place at the cruise port and used for cruise operations.	The cruise port's Port Community System (PCS) or equivalent digital platform or integrated system is integrated via API with the databases of the terminals and the city.
3.4 Stakeholder communications	The cruise port coordinates data along the journey (city-vessel-terminal-port) by email/phone. Depending on the port, passenger journey stakeholders could include the port authority, terminals, the city, mobility providers, port police, border control and other public authorities.	The cruise port digitally shares data with city mobility actors (public transport, taxis, tour operators).	The cruise port has a fully integrated multimodal system enabling visitor-management tools and links with smart city apps, or equivalent city/visitor management platforms.
3.5 Cybersecurity	The cruise port has basic cybersecurity processes in place (firewalls, anti-virus software, back-up procedures) that are compliant with the IMO Maritime Single Window (MSW) requirements.	The cruise port has monitoring, risk assessment, training and incident-response procedures included in its cybersecurity processes.	The cruise port is NIS2 (EU cybersecurity directive) or ISO 27001 (international data security standard) compliant and certified.

Environmental care

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
4.1 Environmental information	The cruise port provides clear, visible environmental guidelines to cruise passengers at terminals (posters, leaflets, basic signage) on topics such as littering, recycling, noise, and respect for local ecosystems and communities.	Environmental guidelines are integrated across digital and physical touchpoints (terminal screens, QR codes, apps, cruise-line information), are co-developed with the city and cruise lines, and cover sustainable mobility, waste separation, water use and behaviour at sensitive sites.	The cruise port leads or participates in destination-wide campaigns for responsible cruise tourism, with monitoring of impacts (e.g. litter collected, complaints, participation rates), and links guidelines to certification schemes (e.g. sustainable destination labels, Blue Flag-type beaches).
4.2 Waste management	The port authority adopts a 'towards zero waste to landfill' policy for its own operations, includes cruise terminals in its waste hierarchy, and ensures compliant Port Reception Facilities (PRFs) for ship-generated waste.	A cruise terminal waste-management plan is in place, with separate collection for main waste streams (recyclables, organics, hazardous waste) and quantified targets to increase recycling and recovery rates over time, aligned with local municipal systems.	The cruise port applies high diversion rates for cruise-related waste (very low landfill share), facilitates reuse/repair and industrial symbiosis (e.g. using certain by-products as inputs for local industries), and works with cruise lines and the city to align 'zero waste' aspirations across the value chain.
4.3 Noise mitigation (air and underwater)	The cruise port complies with applicable regulations at cruise terminals and identifies main environmental aspects (e.g. noise sources) in its environmental-management system.	The cruise port develops and implements specific mitigation plans: noise mapping and management (barriers, operational restrictions, quieter equipment). Underwater-noise risks from port activities are assessed using recognised guidelines (e.g. IMO).	Environmental performance is continuously improved through technology (quieter equipment) and operational measures (speed reduction, routing, time restrictions) to reduce underwater noise and terminal-area nuisance, with monitoring and stakeholder engagement, e.g. through incentives.
4.4 Water management	The cruise port implements basic water-efficiency measures in cruise terminals (water-saving fixtures, leak detection) and monitors freshwater consumption for cruise-related facilities.	A water-management plan sets targets for reduced freshwater use and includes safe reuse of non-potable water (e.g. treated greywater or harvested rainwater) for appropriate purposes such as landscaping, road/terminal cleaning or toilet flushing, in coordination with local authorities.	An integrated water-cycle approach is applied at cruise terminals: high levels of reuse and recycling of water, advanced metering and monitoring, and collaboration with cruise lines on best practices for wastewater and greywater management in line with, or exceeding, applicable standards.
4.5 Air emissions / air quality	The cruise port complies with applicable air quality and emissions regulations and has basic controls in place to reduce unnecessary emissions.	The cruise port actively measures and manages air-quality impacts, establishes reduction objectives, and engages stakeholders to reduce emissions from both terminal and vessel-related operations.	The cruise port demonstrates a positive impact by achieving measurable reductions in air emissions, supporting zero-emission port operations, and transparently reporting performance against science-based or internationally recognized sustainability targets.

Health, Safety & Security

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
5.1 Training and competence	Staff involved in cruise operations receive basic health, safety and security induction training.	Structured training programmes and periodic refresher training are implemented, including drills and exercises with relevant stakeholders.	The cruise port continually assesses, trains, and improves the workforce's skills. The training programs and employee capabilities are consistently aligned with business goals and adapt to changing demands.
5.2 Health management	Basic health protocols are in place for cruise operations, aligned with national health authorities and international health regulations. An updated directory of nearby hospitals and clinics is maintained.	Operational health management plans are established, including coordination procedures with ships, local health services and authorities. Formal communication protocols with health authorities and hospitals are in place.	Health management is integrated into a comprehensive port health system with regular multi-agency exercises, digital tools for information exchange and continuous improvement.
5.3 Risk assessment	The cruise port demonstrates compliance with ISPS requirements and has established a structured security risk management process.	Security risk assessment has been integrated with operational resilience, passenger safety and sustainability management. Risk assessments are conducted with stakeholder involvement, and mitigation measures are monitored.	Dynamic risk management systems – with risk intelligence and predictive capabilities to continuously anticipate, adapt and strengthen resilience – are used, and incorporate operational data, incident analysis and continuous improvement.
5.4 Emergency response plan and crisis management	The cruise port has a written Emergency Response Plan (ERP) in place with no more than 18 months between exercises, including full-scale training exercises and with quarterly partial drills. Emergency contacts and roles are defined but not rehearsed.	The cruise port has actively implemented an ERP, tested through yearly full-scale exercises and quarterly partial drills. Responsibilities and roles are clearly assigned and trained. Communication procedures (internal and external) are defined and practiced. Post-drill debriefs and improvements are incorporated into the ERP update. When applicable (bunker ports) the IAPH Clean Marine Fuels (CMF) tools (e.g. bunker checklists, terminal call checklists, CMF Ready Tool) are actively used when planning and operating clean marine fuel bunkering.	The cruise port has a fully integrated Emergency Management System. Annual full-scale multi-agency joint exercises (involving the port authority, cruise lines, police, health services) and quarterly partial drills are held. Scenarios include complex/mass casualty, cyber incidents, and cascading failures, and clean marine fuels when applicable (bunker ports). Lessons learned are analyzed systematically and used to drive continuous improvement. There is strong redundancy in communications, resources, and command capabilities.

Infrastructure

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
6.1 Green infrastructure: buildings	Cruise terminal buildings comply with basic energy and environmental requirements in national building codes.	Cruise terminal buildings and infrastructure apply recognised green-building principles (e.g. energy-efficient envelopes, daylighting, low-impact materials, construction waste management, LED lighting, basic insulation, low-flow fixtures).	Cruise terminal buildings follow advanced sustainability principles, including circular construction, resource optimisation and climate-resilient design.
6.2 Climate resilient infrastructure	Basic risk assessments for climate and environmental hazards affecting cruise infrastructure have been conducted.	Resilience measures are incorporated into infrastructure planning and design, including redundancy for critical systems.	Climate resilience and long-term adaptation strategies are integrated into cruise infrastructure planning and investment decisions.
6.3 Public transport infrastructure	Basic public transport access is available.	Public transport services are coordinated with local authorities to support cruise passenger flows.	Cruise terminals are well integrated into regional public transport networks, prioritising high-capacity and low-emission mobility options.
6.4 Onshore Power Supply (OPS)	The cruise port has assessed the feasibility of OPS and established a roadmap for implementation.	OPS infrastructure is available at least at one cruise terminal and is integrated into port operations.	OPS infrastructure is available at all cruise terminals and can be used by 50% of calling cruise ships.

About IAPH

Founded in 1955, the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) is a global alliance of port authorities and port-related businesses. Comprised of over 100 different nationalities across the world's continents, member ports handle over one third of the world's sea-borne trade and well over 60% of the world container traffic. IAPH leads global port industry initiatives on decarbonisation and energy transition, risk and resilience management, and accelerating digitalisation in the maritime transport chain. The IAPH's **World Ports Sustainability Program** has grown into the reference database of best practices of ports applying the UN Sustainable Development Goals and integrating them into their businesses - **iaphworldports.org.**



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