

# **Discerning sustainability approaches in shipping**

## **Abstract**

Sustainability should be viewed as the ultimate goal of human beings. However, the reality is still not optimistic. Over the years, sustainability in shipping has attracted growing attention through green or sustainable shipping, similar to sustainable development and green development being the prominent approaches to sustainability in development. However, the concepts of green or sustainable shipping, as well as those for green or sustainable development, remain vague. This paper thus distinguishes these four seemingly similar but essentially different concepts with respect to their theoretical bases, objectives, and implications through a structured literature review. Many have discussed the concept of sustainable development, while only a few have explored these concepts for green development, sustainable shipping, and green shipping. The main difference between sustainable and green development is whether or not the method is anthropocentric: the former emphasizes satisfying the needs of the present and future generations, while the latter is non-anthropocentric or eco-centric, focusing on conserving the health of nature. We argue that green shipping should follow the concept of green development. It is a better approach to reach sustainability than sustainable shipping which follows sustainable development. Finally, a definition of green shipping is proposed for the consideration of sustainability by decision-makers.