

Foresight exercise underlines the industry-leading role of the International Port Community Systems Association

Working collaboratively, shaping the future, leading the conversation: the International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSEA) has embarked on an ambitious Foresight initiative which will consider future scenarios and provide a framework and pathway ahead for Port Community Systems globally.

Foresight exercises are recognised in many industries as vital elements of future planning. IPCSEA is taking the lead in its sector, by creating the first Foresight exercise in support of PCS operators and associated port operations. The exercise will bring together IPCSEA members and external experts at a series of three regional two-day workshops, to be held over the course of a year. Brainstorming sessions will develop 'this-could-happen' scenarios, their potential impacts and possible responses from the Port Community Systems sector. The exercise will enable IPCSEA and its members to prepare for alternative futures and associated risks; understand likely emerging



markets, industry developments and behavioural changes; and adapt and innovate in products and services for future sustainability and resilience.

The IPCSA Foresight exercise is being headed up by Uwe Liebschner, Customs Consultant and IPCSA's Customs Lead, working with Inga Morton, IPCSA General Manager, and business psychologist, facilitator and coach Will Sambrook, CEO of Akenham, who will act as moderator at the Foresight workshops.



Uwe Liebschner,
Customs Consultant and
IPCSA's Customs Lead

“The Foresight exercise is about creating/thinking about scenarios and preparing yourself to mitigate the risks,” said Liebschner. “It is not an exercise in concrete planning for the next five years but rather to bring people together with their collective intelligence to take a helicopter view of what might or could happen in the coming years – for example, geopolitical issues, demographic factors, climate change, lack of resources.”

“The aim of IPCSA's Foresight exercise is to consider the possibilities and establish where we see the issues for the future, bring together IPCSA members from all the

regions to be involved and integrated in the discussions, and increase communication and personal connections between members. At the end of the exercise, we will establish guidance and recommendations at a very high level, around mitigation and potential solutions. We can't prepare for 100% of potential issues but we can have a broad framework in place to be prepared for future challenges.”

The first IPCSA Foresight meeting, to be held in Dubai in November, will be sponsored by Mumbai-based IPCSA member Kale Logistics Solutions, which is also a member of the IPCSA Foresight Expert Group. Vineet Malhotra, Co-Founder and Director, said: “Kale Logistics shares a unified vision with IPCSA in transforming the global maritime industry through Port Community Systems and cutting-edge digital solutions. Our collaboration with IPCSA, spanning over five years, has allowed us to bring a unique blend of innovation and automation that drives global maritime trade. By supporting the first Foresight event at Dubai, we aim to amplify the industry's collective voice and fortify its role



Vineet Malhotra,
Kale Logistics Solutions
Co-Founder and Director

in advancing global trade harmonisation. This initiative is critical to shaping a future where streamlined, efficient trade becomes the standard across the industry.”

At a time when the shipping industry is going through massive change due to both digitalisation and decarbonisation, the IPCSA initiative is a good example for the industry, said Malhotra. “The Foresight project is exactly what the industry needs at this crucial juncture. With the rapid pace of digitalisation and the urgent need for decarbonisation, the project brings together key stakeholders who are dedicated to these critical causes, including trade harmonisation and simplification. In an era marked by geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions and the rise of AI, Foresight will not only set a new benchmark for IPCSA members but will also serve as a beacon for other industry stakeholders, showcasing a commitment to meeting both current and future industry needs.”

Without the Foresight project, there would be a significant gap in leadership within the industry, said Malhotra. “The absence of this initiative could hinder the progress of essential conversations and innovations needed to address the challenges. The industry would miss a critical opportunity to unite stakeholders around a common vision and drive meaningful change.”

IPCSA is undoubtedly setting a precedent with the Foresight exercise, said Umesh Kurlekar, Global Head Maritime Practice at Kale Logistics. “In a time of significant transformation across the shipping and logistics industries, IPCSA’s initiative demonstrates leadership and a commitment to driving positive change. By gathering industry experts and stakeholders to collaboratively address the most pressing issues, IPCSA is not only leading the conversation but also shaping the future direction of the global maritime industry.”

The Foresight exercise will provide a structured approach to anticipating future trends and challenges within the global maritime industry, said Kurlekar. “As the industry navigates rapid changes in technology, regulatory environments and sustainability requirements, having a forward-looking strategy is essential. This exercise allows IPCSA to proactively identify opportunities and risks, ensuring that its members are not just reacting to change, but leading it.”



Umesh Kurlekar,
Global Head Maritime
Practice at Kale Logistics
Solutions

Kale Logistics aims to bring its expertise in digitalisation, automation and trade facilitation to the expert group, contributing to the development of innovative solutions that address the industry's most pressing challenges, Kurlekar added. "By participating in the Foresight exercise, Kale Logistics hopes to help identify and overcome these challenges, fostering a more resilient, efficient, and future-ready maritime industry. Our goal is to ensure that the solutions developed are not only technologically advanced but also practical and implementable on a global scale."

The Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP) is another member of the Foresight Expert Group.



Mona Swoboda,
CIP Program Manager

Mona Swoboda, CIP Program Manager, said: "The IPCSA Foresight project promises to be a major benefit to our sector, as it will allow us to better understand current and future trends and formulate strategic actions to improve our industry's performance, adaptation and innovation. For the CIP, this insight presents an added value, and the collaborative efforts of the

Foresight project will foster an important inter-regional knowledge exchange."

The Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP) is the only permanent forum that brings together the national port authorities of the 34 member countries of the Organization of American States (OAS) and leaders of the maritime-port industry to promote the development of a secure, competitive, sustainable, and inclusive sector, said Swoboda. "The CIP constantly monitors the gaps in a continuously changing maritime and port sector to bring concrete results to regional and international issues. Digitalisation, including the establishment of Port Community Systems, is one of the key priorities for CIP national port authorities and the challenges of implementation require special attention."

"As part of a multilateral governmental organisation, the CIP has the unique ability to serve as a permanent advisory body on port issues relevant to the American content, including North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean. While the region the CIP represents is diverse, many ports and national port authorities face similar challenges as they embark on their digitalisation journey. As part of the IPCSA Foresight project, the CIP hopes to address some of these challenges and find tangible solutions, but also showcase the unique opportunities the port sector in the Americas has in driving digitalisation across the globe."



Youssef Ahouzi,
CEO of Portnet

Also on the Foresight Expert Group is Portnet, the National Single Window for Morocco. Youssef Ahouzi, CEO of Portnet, said: “The foresight exercise is crucial for IPCSA and Portnet for several reasons. Firstly, strategic foresight will help Port Community Systems in different regions understand the impact and changes within the industry. It will enable them to anticipate

potential shifts and adapt their strategies accordingly. In other words, it provides the opportunity to proactively prepare for future developments, seizing opportunities and mitigating risks.”

“Secondly, it is an excellent initiative for knowledge-sharing among members and within the community. We are fortunate to be part of a community composed of countries from various regions around the world, offering a wealth of different perspectives on future opportunities

and challenges. Collaboration and the exchange of experiences foster the development of all and will lead to a convergence towards a collective vision.”

The challenges faced by Port Community Systems are generally similar, albeit in different formats, said Ahouzi. “By sharing these varied experiences, we aim to inspire and provide solutions that have been effective in other contexts, and to offer advice and guidance to those facing similar issues. The key issues and challenges ahead for IPCSA members include adapting to rapidly evolving technologies, managing the complexities of global supply chains, and ensuring interoperability among different Port Community Systems. By leveraging collective insights and solutions from across the community, Portnet believes we can address these challenges more effectively and enhance the overall efficiency and resilience of port systems worldwide.”

As the National Single Window for Morocco, Portnet is eager to collaborate with ports around the world and has always been open to exchanging experiences and participating in collective initiatives, he added.





Javier Gallardo,
Chairman of IPCSA

Javier Gallardo, Chairman of IPCSA, highlighted IPCSA's leadership approach through the Foresight initiative. He said: "For IPCSA, it is essential to provide added value and expertise to all our members. We believe that offering support to our members in addressing the major challenges that Port Community Systems will face in the coming years holds significant value. This initiative

will involve experts from various fields discussing the future, drawing conclusions and attempting to conduct a thoughtful analysis of the future landscape while anticipating possible alternatives."

Gallardo added: "As an association, we believe we have a commitment to our members to assist them by providing valuable information that enables them to navigate the future of Port Community Systems. For this reason, it is essential to pause and take the time to reflect on the current situation and how the future – new technologies, political, economic, social and environmental factors – will continue to reshape the playing field."

"While IPCSA's objectives within this initiative extend beyond digitalisation, it is important to note that the

changes will manifest in many ways, impacting not just digital transformation but also the way business is conducted and the relationships between individuals and entities."

Umesh Kurlekar at Kale Logistics added: "We believe that through collaboration and innovation, we can create a more connected, efficient, and sustainable industry that benefits all stakeholders. The success of the Foresight exercise will depend on the active participation and commitment of everyone involved, and we are excited to be a part of this important journey."

What is the goal?

- Shaping the future
- Scenario thinking
- PCS / SW Vision discussion ➔ 2035