

New standards

by Fitzwilliam Scott

The maritime sector is undergoing a profound transformation. Global decarbonisation goals, evolving regulatory frameworks, and rising commercial expectations are redefining ship supply and how systems that support procurement work. While technological innovation in fuel and vessel design has taken centre stage, a quieter but equally significant shift is unfolding behind the scenes: the digital and environmental evolution of procurement and ship supply. This isn't just an operational change – it's a strategic pivot, one that could define the success and sustainability of maritime businesses in the years to come.

For decades, procurement in the maritime world revolved around three key pillars: availability, speed, and cost. These remain important, but they are no longer the only benchmarks. Environmental impact, social governance, and ethical sourcing are emerging as new standards; not as idealistic extras but as operational imperatives.

Shipowners, charterers, and even port authorities are placing increased scrutiny on supply chains. Procurement teams must now ask not only 'how much does it cost?' but also 'what's the footprint of this delivery?'; 'how was it sourced?'; and 'does this align with our ESG targets?'

This evolution is part of a larger movement across shipping. Initiatives like the International Maritime Organization's 2030 and 2050 targets, along with the EU's Fit for 55 package and the Carbon Intensity Indicator framework, are pushing for measurable change. The procurement and ship supply sectors must now mirror that change – or risk becoming the weak link in an otherwise strong sustainability strategy.

The digital backbone

Sustainability isn't the only force reshaping maritime supply. The digital revolution is accelerating how procurement decisions are made, communicated, and executed. In an industry long dominated by spreadsheets and manual requests for quotations, digital tools are streamlining processes and enabling smarter, faster, and more accountable sourcing.

Platforms like Quick Quote, developed by AVS Global Supply, illustrate this shift in action. Designed to reduce response times, simplify quotation requests, and increase transparency, tools like these reduce procurement friction while generating valuable data insights for both suppliers and buyers.

What is more, digital platforms offer better traceability, smarter stock control, and predictive analytics, all essential in an era where supply disruptions, emissions tracking, and cost pressures are ever-present. Digitalisation isn't just modernising the supply chain – it's helping to future-proof it.

Beyond reputation boost

Buyers are no longer satisfied with price lists and delivery dates. They want to know the origin of goods, the working conditions behind them, the emissions involved in getting them on board, and the supplier's own environmental & social credentials. In short, transparency is in high demand.

That is why responsible suppliers are going beyond compliance. AVS Global Supply is a proud participant in the UN Global Compact, aligning with 10 globally recognised principles covering human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption. This isn't just a reputation boost – it's a way of embedding transparency and accountability into every tier of the supply chain.

As pressure mounts on ship operators to demonstrate sustainability performance, especially to regulators, financiers, and cargo owners, they are seeking out suppliers who

share their values and can support their reporting obligations. In this context, transparency has become a procurement prerequisite.

Another major trend is supply solution customisation. Gone are the days when ship supply meant generic products delivered in bulk. Today, vessels require tailored solutions that reflect their operational profiles, crew needs, regulatory status, and environmental goals. For instance, ships running on alternative fuels, such as LNG or methanol, require new safety equipment, auxiliary systems, and handling tools. Vessels sailing in emission control areas need compliant low-sulphur products and documentation to match.

Accordingly, long voyages demand resilient provisioning strategies with minimal waste. Modern suppliers must offer more than catalogue ordering. They must advise, anticipate, and adapt. From curated catering programmes and waste-reduction solutions to region-specific inventory planning, supply partners have to act as strategic extensions of their clients' operations.

Innovation-forward

Sustainability in ship supply doesn't always require a radical overhaul. In many cases, it's about making smart changes with measurable outcomes.

Consider water provisioning. A single vessel can consume over 12,000 plastic bottles annually, generating waste, storage challenges, and health concerns. In response, AVS Global Supply has partnered with AQUAREX to launch AVS Water,



Photo: AVS



a compact onboard filtration system that replaces bottled water entirely. The results are immediate: reduced plastic waste, lower costs, more efficient storage, and improved crew well-being. This is just one example of how practical innovation, born out of listening to operational pain points, can make a major difference.

Food provisioning is another area ripe for re-imagining. While it's often treated as a logistics task, it intersects directly with environmental performance, crew welfare, and even retention. AVS' Caring Beyond Catering initiative shows what's possible. It combines nutritional expertise, cultural sensitivity, and waste minimisation to create holistic catering strategies that support not just operational efficiency but human sustainability at sea. This includes balanced

menu planning to meet dietary needs within budget, reduction in single-use packaging, plant-forward meal options to lower emissions, and smart inventory to minimise food waste. It is an approach that feeds more than the body – it supports morale, health, and retention (particularly important in a sector where crews are away from home for long periods and where workforce well-being is increasingly linked to performance).

Sustainability also demands rethinking the logistics behind ship supply. Delivering provisions and parts to over 1,500 ports, as AVS does, requires more than scale. It calls

for coordination, local partnerships, and sustainable logistics strategies. By investing in regional networks, ISO-certified processes, and 24/7 coordination systems, AVS and similar leaders are able to reduce redundant shipments, lower fuel use in deliveries, and offer just-in-time solutions that limit waste and downtime. Where possible, local sourcing gets priority to reduce transportation emissions and support community economies, reinforcing a more circular and responsible supply model.

From transactional to transformational

In today's environment, ship supply is no longer about simply responding to orders. It's about being a proactive, informed, and adaptable partner. Suppliers must now support clients with compliance, ESG reporting, training, and even digital integration. That is why companies like AVS are expanding their role – from vendor to strategic ally. They are advising clients on procurement best practices, helping anticipate regulation-driven needs, and integrating smart tools that support speed, consistency, and sustainability. The relationship is shifting from transactional to transformational.

As regulatory, commercial, and public scrutiny grows, the procurement function is becoming more than a back-office operation – it's a competitive lever. Operators who embrace sustainable and digitalised procurement will position themselves for preferred status with financiers, customers, and port authorities alike. Suppliers that can contribute to sustainability targets, simplify reporting, and improve operational resilience will be the ones who thrive; those who lag – risk becoming obsolete. Maritime's future will be shaped not only by what fuels we burn or what vessels we build but by how we provision, how we source, and who we trust to deliver.

Ship supply, once seen as a secondary consideration, is now a strategic front line in the industry's shift towards sustainability and digitalisation. With the right suppliers – those who are agile, accountable, and aligned with tomorrow's goals – shipowners can not only meet compliance demands but build a smarter, greener, and more resilient operation. By investing in innovation, committing to responsible practices, and staying ahead of regulatory change, AVS Global Supply isn't just keeping up – it's helping lead the change. □



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