

# BWM convention

<b>Official reference</b>	International convention for the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments	
<b>Official website</b>	www.imo.org	
<b>Relevant dates</b>	Document	13/02/2004
	Entry into force	8/09/2017
	Ratification by Belgium	7/03/2016
<b>Policy level</b>	International	
<b>Type of instrument</b>	Convention	
<b>Geographical reach</b>	World seas	
<b>International contact point</b>	International Maritime Organisation (IMO)	
<b>Competent authority in Belgium</b>	Federal authorities; FPS Mobility and Transport; DG Maritime Transport	
<b>Flemish ratification decree</b>	Decreet 13 november 2015 houdende instemming met het Internationaal Verdrag voor de controle en het beheer van ballastwater en sedimenten van schepen, gedaan te Londen op 13 februari 2004	

## // abstract:

The BWM convention stipulates that the Parties of the convention need to develop a national policy, strategies and programmes for the management of ballast water in ports (e.g. sediment reception facilities) and the waters covered by their jurisdiction. Sediment reception facilities in which the ballast tanks can be cleaned are to be made available in the ports designated by the respective Party to the convention.

In addition, the Parties have to facilitate scientific and technical research for ballast water management and the monitoring of its effects. These are necessary for the prevention of the spreading of non-indigenous aquatic organisms through ballast water and sediments. The convention also stipulates that this research should be made available to all other Parties of the convention. Furthermore, the convention also includes clauses concerning the availability of relevant information regarding the other Contracting Parties, ships' certification, infringements and inspection of the convention's rules.

In order to prevent the introduction of non-indigenous species through ships' ballast tanks, the convention obliges ships to set up a ship-specific management plan for ballast water and sediments. Moreover, ships need to carry aboard an international ballast water management certificate as well as a ballast water report file wherein all ballast operations are listed. The ballast water management needs to follow the standard procedures. Another element in the convention concerns the ballast water exchange at sea, that needs to take place preferably 200 nautical miles from the mainland. If this proves impossible, the exchange needs to take place more than 50 nautical miles from the mainland, in water at least 200 m in depth. The ratification pending, [OSPAR](#) (p.41) advises to respect some measures concerning the ballast water of ships on a voluntary basis. Prior to the BWM convention, the IMO resolution of 1997 (A.868(20)) provided regulations for the inspection and treatment of ballast water, to prevent the exchange of harmful organisms.