Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Size & Share Analysis - Growth Trends and Forecast (2026 - 2031)

> **Industry:** Maritime, Port & Container Operations (Logistics & Supply Chain)

> **Source:** https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/global-bulk-cargo-shipping-market
> **Scraped Date:** 2026-09-17

Executive Market Summary

Market Metric	Details
Base Market Size	USD 504.80 billion
Projected Forecast (2031)	USD 504.80 billion
Growth Rate (CAGR)	4.75 %
Largest Market Region	N/A
Fastest-Growing Region	N/A

Market Visualizations & Infographics

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![Major players in Bulk Cargo Shipping industry](images/chart_2.png)

![Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Size](images/chart_3.png)

![Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Share by Cargo Type, 2025](images/chart_4.png)

![Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Share by Shipping Route, 2025](images/chart_5.png)

![Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Growth Rate by Region](images/chart_6.png)

![Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Concentration](images/chart_7.png)

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![Mordor Intelligence on Facebook](images/chart_12.svg)

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![ESOMAR](images/chart_17.png)

![GPTW](images/chart_19.png)
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Comprehensive Research Analysis

Overview Points List Flex 49 Share Feature End

Market Overview

Study Period
|

2020 - 2031
|

Market Size (2026)
|

USD 504.80 Billion
|

Market Size (2031)
|

USD 636.61 Billion
|

Growth Rate (2026 - 2031)
|

4.75 %
|

Fastest Growing Market
|

Asia-Pacific
|

Largest Market
|

Asia-Pacific
|

Market Concentration
|

Medium
|

Major Players

*Disclaimer: Major Players sorted in no particular order

|

Market Overview

Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Analysis by Mordor Intelligence

The Bulk cargo shipping market size was valued at USD 480.82 billion in 2025 and is estimated to grow from USD 504.80 billion in 2026 to reach USD 636.61 billion by 2031 at 4.75% CAGR over 2026-2031.

The bulk cargo shipping market is supported by intercontinental movements of iron ore, coal, grain, and liquid energy commodities. Global seaborne bulk trade exceeded 7.2 billion tonnes in 2025 and grew 1.4% from the prior year, while iron ore and coal represented more than half of dry bulk volumes. Simandou sent its first commercial iron ore cargo to China in December 2025, creating a Guinea-to-China voyage of 46 days compared with 10 to 14 days from Australia. That longer route raises tonne-mile demand and gives Capesize operators a larger revenue opportunity per cargo movement. The balance between dry bulk vessel demand growth of 2.5% and fleet growth of 1.4% in 2025 sustained freight-rate strength entering 2026[1]“Dry Bulk Shipping Market Overview & Outlook, January 2026,” BIMCO, bimco.org.

Key Report Takeaways

* By cargo type, dry bulk cargo held 75.12% of the bulk cargo shipping market share in 2025, while liquid bulk cargo is forecast to grow at a 6.17% CAGR through 2031.

* By shipping route, international shipping held 81.93% of the bulk cargo shipping market size in 2025, while domestic coastal shipping is forecast to grow at a 5.84% CAGR through 2031.

* By end-use industry, mining and metals held 28.87% of the bulk cargo shipping market share in 2025, while chemicals and petrochemicals are forecast to grow at a 6.62% CAGR through 2031.

* By geography, Asia-Pacific held 51.88% of the bulk cargo shipping market size in 2025 and is forecast to grow at a 5.63% CAGR through 2031.

Key Market Trends

Global Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Trends and Insights

Drivers Impact Analysis*

Driver	(~) % Impact on CAGR Forecast	Geographic Relevance	Impact Timeline
Rising Seaborne Demand for Iron Ore and Coal	+1.3%	Global, concentrated in Australia-Brazil-West Africa to Asia-Pacific corridors	

Short term (≤ 2 years)
|

Expansion of Grain and Fertilizer Trade Flows

|

+0.9%
|

Global, with key corridors in East Coast South America, United States Gulf, and Black Sea
|

Medium term (2-4 years)
|

Fleet Efficiency Gains From Larger Bulk Carriers

|

+0.7%
|

Global, particularly Atlantic and Pacific deep-sea trade lanes
|

Long term (≥ 4 years)
|

Port Automation and Digital Voyage Optimization

|

+0.6%
|

Asia-Pacific core, with spillover to Europe and Middle East and Africa
|

Long term (≥ 4 years)
|

Growth in Specialized Liquid Bulk Trade Corridors

|

+0.5%
|

Middle East, North America, and Asia-Pacific
|

Medium term (2-4 years)
|

Commodity Supply Re-Localization and Trade Diversion

|

+0.4%
|

Global, with concentration on Atlantic and Indian Ocean routes
|

Medium term (2-4 years)
|

Source: Mordor Intelligence
|

Competitive Landscape

Competitive Landscape

The bulk cargo shipping market is moderately fragmented, and no single operator controls more than a low single-digit share of global fleet capacity. In the bulk cargo shipping market, consolidation is nevertheless increasing among leading owners. CMB.TECH successfully completed its stock-for-stock merger with Golden Ocean Group in August 2025, combining dry bulk fleets across Capesize, Panamax, and Ultramax classes. Star Bulk agreed in March 2026 to acquire 16 vessels from Diana Shipping, representing 1.8 million DWT across Newcastlemax, Capesize, Ultramax, and Supramax ships. The transaction is intended to improve scale, lower per-vessel overhead, and strengthen chartering reach. Consolidation also helps owners support investment in vessel technology.

COSCO Shipping Bulk, NYK Line, and MOL remain important participants in state-backed and Japanese shipping-house fleets. COSCO Shipping Development contracted 15 grain vessels and 9 additional bulk vessels in June 2026. The company also contracted 15 Newcastlemax vessels in July 2026. These orders reinforce fleet capability in grain and iron ore corridors. Greek beneficial owners are also active in fleet renewal, with a preference for larger Capesize and Kamsarmax vessels. The bulk cargo shipping industry is moving toward ships with greater commercial liquidity and lower emissions exposure.

Technology is a further area of competition in the bulk cargo shipping market. Western Bulk’s March 2026 deployment of ZeroNorth across 120 vessels is one example of a move toward real-time voyage planning. ZeroNorth’s Propel platform can generate voyage plans, communicate with vessel masters, and revise routing during transit. These tools can support speed, routing, and carbon decisions as charterers pay closer attention to carbon intensity. Specialized liquid bulk corridors and Arctic-capable dry bulk routes remain areas where operators may seek new earnings sources. Mixed operators can also diversify earnings between grain, dry bulk, and tanker activity when route disruption changes relative freight opportunities.

Bulk Cargo Shipping Industry Leaders

*

Oldendorff Carriers

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COSCO Shipping Bulk Co., Ltd.

*

NYK Line

*

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL)

*

Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha ("K" Line)

*

*Disclaimer: Major Players sorted in no particular order

Component Component 3 Scope Of The Report Bottom

Global Bulk Cargo Shipping Market Report Scope

By Cargo Type

Dry Bulk Cargo
|

Iron Ore
|

|

Coal
|

|

Grain (Wheat, Corn, Soybeans, etc.)
|

|

Fertilizers
|

|

Cement and Clinker
|

|

Bauxite and Alumina
|

|

Steel Products
|

|

Other Minor Dry Bulk Commodities
|

Liquid Bulk Cargo
|

Crude Oil
|

|

Refined Petroleum Products
|

|

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)
|

|

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)
|

|

Chemicals
|

|

Edible and Vegetable Oils
|

|

Molasses
|

|

Other Liquid Bulk Commodities
|

Segmentation Accordion Item

By Region/Country

North America
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United States
|

|

Canada
|

|

Mexico
|

South America
|

Brazil
|

|

Peru
|

|

Chile
|

|

Argentina
|

|

Rest of South America
|

Asia-Pacific

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China
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|

Japan
|

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South Korea
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India
|

|

Australia
|

|

Southeast Asia
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|

Rest of Asia-Pacific
|

Europe
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United Kingdom
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|

Germany
|

|

France
|

|

Spain
|

|

Italy
|

|

Belgium
|

|

Netherlands

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NORDICS (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden)
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|

Rest of Europe
|

Middle East and Africa
|

United Arab Emirates
|

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Saudi Arabia
|

|

South Africa
|

|

Nigeria
|

|

Egypt
|

|

Rest of the Middle East and Africa
|

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the 2026 value of bulk cargo shipping?

The sector is valued at USD 504.80 billion in 2026 and is forecast to reach USD 636.61 billion by 2031 at a 4.75% CAGR.

Which cargo type is growing fastest through 2031?

Liquid bulk cargo is forecast to grow at a 6.17% CAGR, supported by LNG, crude o il rerouting, and chemical feedstock flows.

Why is Simandou important for ocean freight?

Guinea-to-China iron ore voyages take 46 days, compared with 10 to 14 days from Australia, which increases tonne-mile demand.

Which region has the largest role in global bulk shipping?

Asia-Pacific held 51.88% of revenue in 2025 and is forecast to grow at a 5.63% CAGR through 2031.

How do CII rules affect bulk carrier owners?

The IMO requires an 11% cumulative carbon-intensity improvement by end-2026, increasing pressure on older vessels.

What is changing in fleet investment?

Owners are ordering larger vessels with fuel flexibility, including methanol-and-ammonia-ready Newcastlemax ships.