Spotting a fake is no simple matter

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A certificate is approach the institution that issued it and ask them to verify the certificate. However, in the course of the research we found that links between institutions were frequently non-existent or, where they existed, they were not used. Often certificates would be reported and accepted on the basis of communication and limited resources existed to the extent that endorsements were being issued without any independent verification of a certificate.

In plain terms, the safe and effective operation of vessels across the world’s seas depends on the existence of fully qualified and adequately skilled seafarers. On a day-to-day basis seafarers place great trust on the abilities and skills of their fellow crew. If just one of those seafarers has come aboard with a fraudulently obtained certificate and lacks the necessary skills, then a profession already suffused with risk becomes perilous.

Perhaps this article adopts a somewhat negative tone, but then, if the fraudulent certification exists, and the only way of tackling it successfully is both to treat the source of the problem and to stop the circulation of existing fraudulent certificates through the maritime community. When it comes to the latter, the maritime sector is only beginning to address the problem – a problem that will remain until it becomes more systematic and recognises that it needs to be addressed by the maritime community as a whole.