PORTSPARE EXPRESS

Sample Maritime Business Plan

PortSpare Express | A worked example of a maritime logistics coordination service

MSc in Shipping and Sea Transports: Economics and Politics

THIS IS A FICTIONAL TEACHING CASE. PortSpare Express does not represent a verified operating business. The pricing, demand, contracts, staffing and forecasts are illustrative assumptions—not market quotations, completed interviews or actual commercial commitments.

Business concept: An asset-light maritime logistics coordination service; PortSpare would not own vessels, vehicles or warehouses.

Initial coverage: Piraeus, Greece, limited to locations and hours where partner availability and access can be confirmed.

Recommendation: Test the service through a paid 90-day pilot before making any decision on full-scale launch.

DOCUMENT GUIDE: Nine chapters, followed by financial schedules, a service blueprint and supporting sources. The one-page Executive Summary is supplied separately.

Financial basis: nominal euros (€), excluding VAT. The forecasts use illustrative months after launch rather than calendar dates.

Evidence notation: [S#] public source; [A] planning assumption; [V] evidence to be gathered.

1. Executive overview

PortSpare Express proposes a single point of contact for urgent spare-part deliveries to vessels calling at Piraeus. Its intended customers are ship-management companies that need to coordinate suppliers, couriers and port contacts. For an accepted job, PortSpare would check the request, confirm workable delivery arrangements, provide progress updates and document the handover. The service is coordination, not the supply of parts or a guarantee of repairs.

In the current arrangement, a ship manager may need to contact several parties to establish where a spare part is and when it can reach the vessel. This can absorb staff time and leave handover responsibilities unclear. Whether customers would pay to reduce that coordination burden remains to be established [V]. Public sources confirm maritime and ship-repair activity in Piraeus and show that competing services already exist [S1–S4]; they do not establish unmet demand for PortSpare.

Decision summary

Question	Proposed answer / test
Customer	Ship-management firms handling technical procurement for port calls in Piraeus.
Offer	One accountable coordination point; supplier and courier charges remain separate.
Pricing	€250 coordination fee per accepted job [A]; willingness to pay untested [V].
Economics	€180 contribution per job; 27 monthly jobs break even at planned €4,800 fixed cost [A].
Funding	€40,000 illustrative founder funding; €12,000 initial setup [A].
Decision	Validate demand, port-access arrangements and partner capability in a paid 90-day pilot.

The base case assumes 377 jobs in Year 1 and yields an operating result of €10,260 before tax, depreciation and financing. Under the combined downside—30% fewer monthly jobs and 20% higher unit variable cost—the first year is loss-making and cash headroom narrows. Given the absence of contracted demand, the appropriate decision is to fund a controlled pilot, not an unconditional launch.

2. Customer and problem

Target customer and roles

The target account is a ship-management company responsible for maintenance and procurement during a vessel call at Piraeus. A technical superintendent or operations coordinator may use the service; a technical or purchasing manager may approve it; and the company's accounts function may arrange payment. Those roles need not be held by the same person.

Role	Illustrative position	What must be verified
User	Technical superintendent	Frequency and impact of urgent requests.
Buyer	Technical / purchasing manager	Approval process and service-selection criteria.
Payer	Ship-management company	Budget, credit terms and invoice acceptance.

Problem hypothesis and current workaround

A manager handling an urgent part may have to obtain separate updates from a supplier, courier and local agent. If details are passed on late or inaccurately, the delivery becomes harder to track. That could complicate maintenance planning and, in some cases, the vessel's departure. The frequency and cost of such incidents have not been measured [V].

Customer validation

Before expanding, the pilot team should review actual recent delivery cases with prospective customers. If access is feasible, it would seek 5–8 interviews with technical, operational and purchasing staff, including firms unlikely to buy. Questions should cover the last urgent delivery, who coordinated it, what went wrong, existing fees and who approves an outside provider. Clear evidence that current arrangements work well or that customers reject a separate coordination fee would count against the concept [V].

Evidence to collect [V]: dated interview notes, documented delivery incidents, current quotations, purchasing approval rules, request frequency and acceptance of separate supplier and courier billing.

3. Market and competition

Market boundary

The initial market is deliberately narrow: coordination of urgent technical spare parts for commercial vessel calls in the Piraeus area, within confirmed access arrangements and staffed hours. Piraeus Port Authority reports port and ship-repair activity in 2025 [S1]. UNCTAD provides wider context on shipping disruption and port digitalisation [S2]. Neither source estimates the number of customers willing to pay PortSpare's proposed fee.

Competitors and substitutes

Customers already have alternatives: their own procurement teams, established ship agents, marine-spares suppliers and couriers. Avramar describes spare-parts delivery services in Piraeus, while Phoenixspares advertises marine-spares sourcing and dispatch [S3, S4]. These are examples of available alternatives, not evidence that PortSpare is faster, cheaper or more reliable.

Customer alternative	Why customers may prefer it	PortSpare response to test
Existing ship agent	Familiar, may already handle deliveries.	More transparent handoff records; no claim of superiority.
Spare-parts supplier	Can bundle sourcing and delivery.	Supplier-neutral coordination when several parties are involved.
Internal team + courier	No separate coordination fee.	Potentially less staff chasing and clearer ownership.

Illustrative sales path

The sales model starts with outreach to 60 qualified firms. It assumes 15 paid pilots (25% conversion), six recurring accounts (40% of pilots), six monthly jobs per recurring account and ten additional ad hoc jobs at maturity [A]. This gives 46 jobs in Month 12. The figures are inputs to the financial model, not an estimate derived from market research; actual market size and acquisition cost still require evidence [V].

The intended sales approach is direct contact with technical and procurement teams. Requests would arrive by dedicated email or telephone and be accepted job by job. Before opening an account, PortSpare would confirm the buyer's authority, the delivery scope and the availability of suitable suppliers and partners.

4. Proposed service and the 7Ps

Service promise and boundaries

For each accepted job, PortSpare would coordinate the collection and handover of an identified spare part. The customer or a nominated supplier provides the part, while an authorised partner performs transport. PortSpare would not manufacture parts, hold guaranteed stock, repair machinery or promise access to a restricted port area. Third-party charges require separate customer approval and are assumed to be invoiced directly by the relevant providers [A].

P	PortSpare decision [A]
Product	Request validation, partner coordination, status updates and proof of handover.
Price	€250 per accepted coordination job; separate supplier/courier invoices.
Place	Direct B2B request; initially Piraeus only and verified staffed hours.
Promotion	Direct outreach and pilot evidence; no unsupported “zero delay” claims.
People	PortSpare coordinator; supplier; courier/port agent with agreed role boundaries.
Process	Request → validate → arrange → update → document close-out.
Physical evidence	Booking reference, timestamped status log, handover proof and invoice.

Consistency of the offer

The proposed service window is Monday–Friday, 08:00–18:00 local time [A]. Valid requests received within those hours would have a 30-minute acknowledgement target [A]. PortSpare would not advertise 24/7 availability; requests outside the stated hours would be declined or handled only under a separately agreed arrangement. The pilot must establish whether staffing, response times and supplier readiness support this offer [V].

A job would be accepted only after checking the exact part, vessel, supplier readiness, permitted access, partner availability, delivery point, transport charges and feasible timing.

5. Strategic diagnosis: SWOT and TOWS

The SWOT is a pre-launch assessment. Its strengths are proposed features of the business model, rather than achievements supported by operating history. External opportunities and threats are considered alongside the evidence needed to test them.

SWOT	Priority factors
Strengths	S1: Narrow, asset-light operating scope [A]. S2: One accountable coordinator and written handoffs [A].
Weaknesses	W1: No validated demand or client record [V]. W2: Partner dependence and limited staffed coverage [A].
Opportunities	O1: Established Piraeus maritime service ecosystem [S1]. O2: Potential demand for clearer updates [V].
Threats	T1: Existing agents/suppliers offering comparable help [S3–S4]. T2: Access, timing and partner failures.

Strategic responses (TOWS)

Pairing	Action and test
SO: S2 + O1	Offer a limited single-contact pilot to Piraeus ship managers; log every handoff.
ST: S1 + T1	Differentiate on coordination transparency, not unsupported claims of faster delivery.
WO: W1 + O2	Run buyer interviews and paid pilots before hiring for a larger operation.
WT: W2 + T2	Use authorised partners, a backup plan and explicit acceptance rules; refuse unfeasible jobs.

Priority actions

Two actions take priority. The WO response is to test paid demand before adding permanent capacity. The WT response is to establish reliable supplier-to-courier handoffs and permission checks. A fleet of owned vehicles, nationwide coverage and a 24/7 offer are excluded from the initial plan because the pilot cannot yet support those commitments.

The commercial lead would track interviews, paid jobs and repeat purchases. The operations lead would monitor permission checks, handover records and incident resolution. At the end of the pilot, management would decide whether to continue, modify or discontinue the service.

6. Operations and organisation

Operating workflow

A job passes through five steps. First, the coordinator records the buyer, vessel, exact part, supplier and deadline. Next, the team checks stock readiness, access and the approved fee. An authorised courier or port agent is then assigned for collection and handover. During delivery, the coordinator checks confirmations and alerts the customer to changes. Finally, proof of delivery is collected, the job record is closed and the coordination invoice is issued. Appendix E details the customer-facing and internal activities.

Responsibility at the critical handoffs

Actor	Accountability
Customer / buyer	Provides correct instructions, approves separate partner charges and accepts feasible scope.
PortSpare coordinator	Checks, schedules, communicates, escalates and documents performance.
Supplier	Confirms identity, availability and permitted release of the spare part.
Courier / port agent	Performs authorised collection, transport and handover; supplies completion record.

People, assets and capacity

The base model budgets one full-time coordinator and variable per-job support, with service availability proposed for weekdays from 08:00 to 18:00 [A]. Monthly capacity is assumed to reach 60 jobs [A]. These figures need testing: urgent requests may arrive together, and the pilot must establish how breaks, absences and peak workloads will be covered. PortSpare would own no delivery vehicle or warehouse.

Controls and recovery

Before accepting a delivery, the coordinator would check part identity, authorised port access, any applicable customs or agency requirements and the suitability of the chosen partner. If a part is unavailable or a handoff fails, the customer would receive an updated assessment; alternatives would be arranged only with approval. Job records would be restricted to authorised participants. Local legal, insurance and operational requirements still need professional verification before trading.

Proposed service standards [A] are acknowledgement within 30 minutes during staffed hours, complete handover evidence for at least 98% of completed pilot jobs, permission checks before every acceptance, and a named owner for each exception.

7. Financial analysis

The financial model covers PortSpare's coordination fee and its own operating costs. Spare parts and courier services are assumed to be billed to the customer by those providers, so their charges are not shown as PortSpare revenue or expense. All fee, cost, demand and payment assumptions remain to be verified [A, V].

Metric	Illustrative assumption / result
Unit of sale	One accepted coordination job; fee = €250.
Variable cost	€70/job; contribution = €180/job (€250 – €70).
Fixed operating cost	€4,800/month: €57,600 in Year 1.
Break-even	€4,800 / €180 = 26.67 → 27 whole jobs/month.
Year 1 demand	377 jobs; €94,250 revenue; €10,260 operating result.
Setup and financing	€12,000 setup; €40,000 initial founder funding.
Cash timing	All invoices collected one month after the job; costs paid in month.
Cash result	Minimum base-case cash €14,960 (Month 6); Month 18 €52,200.

Operating result and cash flow

The 377 jobs assumed for Year 1 generate €67,860 in contribution (377 × €180). After €57,600 of annual fixed operating cost, the operating result is €10,260, before tax, depreciation, financing and any unmodelled losses. The separate €12,000 setup outlay is included in cash flow rather than this operating result. A positive operating result does not, by itself, guarantee adequate liquidity.

Downside scenario

The combined downside assumes 30% fewer jobs in each month and 20% higher variable cost per job. On that basis the Year 1 operating result is −€13,942, and the minimum cash balance over 18 months falls to €5,796, despite €40,000 of starting equity. The pilot should therefore test demand, collection times and partner costs before management commits to expansion. Appendices B–D show the calculations.

8. Risk and implementation

Risk register

Risk event	Early warning	Owner / response
Low paid demand	Fewer than 30 cumulative paid jobs in pilot.	Commercial: revise segment, price or stop expansion.
Supplier-to-courier failure	No release confirmation before agreed cutoff.	Operations: escalate, inform buyer, use approved alternative.
Port access / clearance	Permissions not confirmed at acceptance.	Operations: do not accept or promise delivery.
Late customer payment	Receivables exceed agreed terms.	Finance: revise credit, request deposits, update cash forecast.
Data or document error	Part/vessel identity missing or inconsistent.	Coordinator: hold job, verify with authorised buyer.

Implementation sequence

Preparatory weeks 1–2 would focus on legal and port-entry checks, authorised partners and initial customer discussions [V]. Weeks 3–4 would test request forms, escalation routes and confirmation records [V]. A paid 90-day pilot would then monitor job volumes, unit contribution, complaints and exceptions [A]. At Day 90, management would decide whether to continue, revise or stop. Additional hiring and sales activity in Months 4–12 would depend on that decision.

Pilot decision criteria

The proposed expansion gate is at least 30 paid pilot jobs from four separate customer firms, no unauthorised port entry, handover evidence for at least 98% of completed jobs, positive unit contribution and documented resolution of serious incidents. If forecast cash headroom falls below €5,000 for a sustained period, the plan calls for immediate corrective action or additional funding. None of these targets has yet been achieved.

Launch approval also depends on confirming any required licences, insurance, responsibility for losses, data-handling arrangements and local port procedures.

9. Conclusion, ask and limitations

Recommendation

The immediate recommendation is a paid 90-day pilot in Piraeus, contingent on authorised partners, workable port access and commercial registration. PortSpare should not purchase a fleet, promise 24-hour coverage or extend service beyond verified operating limits. Measured demand, delivery performance and cash outcomes would determine whether the concept continues, changes or closes.

Requested commitment

The model calls for €40,000 in founder equity [A]. Of that amount, €12,000 is allocated to initial setup; the balance provides working capital and contingency. Before funds are released for the pilot, the founders would complete legal and operational checks and agree a short written charter assigning responsibilities. This is a worked financing requirement, not a real investment offer.

Conditions for expansion

The decisive evidence is commercial and operational: Will firms accept a €250 coordination fee in addition to courier charges? Can six recurring accounts be acquired? Does coordination materially reduce the customer's workload? Can authorised partners perform consistently, and is capacity of 60 jobs per month realistic? The pilot and subsequent research must answer these questions [V].

Evidence register

Code	Use in this plan	Status
[S1]	Piraeus Port Authority: public port / ship-repair activity information.	External source; NOT PortSpare demand.
[S2]	UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport 2025: context on shipping and digital port processes.	External macro context.
[S3–S4]	Avramar and Phoenixspares public service descriptions.	Existing-provider examples.
[A]	Fee, sales path, staff capacity, costs, cash, five-year projections.	Illustrative assumptions.
[V]	Interviews, supplier quotes, verified pricing, permissions and paid pilot.	Not yet evidenced.

The appendices contain the model assumptions, 18 monthly cash-flow periods, five annual projections, downside tests, a service blueprint and the source register. Figures in the separate Executive Summary should agree with those used here.

Appendix A — Assumptions and unit economics

The following schedules show how the assumed costs, volumes and payment terms produce the model results. They are illustrative planning figures, not supplier quotations or customer commitments [A].

Input	Assumption	Reason / verification
Coordination fee	€250/job	Used in the prior PortSpare 7Ps case; must test willingness to pay.
Variable cost	€70/job	€40 freelance/exception assistance; €15 communication/admin; €15 expected rework allowance [A].
Monthly fixed cost	€4,800	€2,700 staff incl. load; €550 admin/insurance; €450 software/comms; €650 sales; €450 premises/overhead.
Initial setup	€12,000	Templates/system €5k; legal/insurance review €3k; onboarding/training €2k; contingency €2k.
Initial funding	€40,000	Assumed founder equity funded in Month 1.
Collection lag	1 month	All coordination invoices paid in following month; no bad debt assumed.
Operating capacity	60 jobs/month (base)	One coordinator and variable support; simultaneous requests may reduce practical capacity.
Courier / supplier	Not in PortSpare bill	Third parties assumed to invoice customer directly, with separate approval.
Forecast treatment	Nominal euros; VAT excluded	Tax, loan interest, depreciation, inflation in Year 1 and exceptional loss excluded.

At the assumed €250 fee and €70 variable cost, contribution is €180 per job. Monthly fixed cost of €4,800 divided by €180 gives 26.67, or 27 whole jobs to break even. Contribution is measured before fixed and setup costs.

Year 1 monthly job path (Months 1–12): 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 35, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46. Months 13–18: 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58. This is a conditional ramp; no order book is claimed.

Appendix B — Monthly cash flow, Months 1–9

Customer invoices are assumed to be collected one month after billing; fixed and variable costs are paid when incurred. The model includes €40,000 equity and €12,000 setup expenditure in Month 1. Amounts are in euros (€).

Mo	Jobs	Billed	Cash in	Var.	Fixed	Setup	Equity	End cash
1	12	3,000	0	840	4,800	12,000	40,000	22,360
2	16	4,000	3,000	1,120	4,800	0	0	19,440
3	20	5,000	4,000	1,400	4,800	0	0	17,240
4	24	6,000	5,000	1,680	4,800	0	0	15,760
5	28	7,000	6,000	1,960	4,800	0	0	15,000
6	32	8,000	7,000	2,240	4,800	0	0	14,960
7	35	8,750	8,000	2,450	4,800	0	0	15,710
8	38	9,500	8,750	2,660	4,800	0	0	17,000
9	40	10,000	9,500	2,800	4,800	0	0	18,900

Reading the monthly cash flow

In Month 1, €40,000 of equity is reduced by €12,000 setup spending, €4,800 fixed cost and €840 variable cost, leaving €22,360. No customer cash is received in that month. The base-case cash balance reaches its low of €14,960 in Month 6, after the assumed monthly operating break-even point.

Cash-flow calculation

Closing cash equals opening cash plus customer receipts and funding, less variable costs, fixed costs and setup expenditure. Billing and cash collection occur in different months under this model.

Appendix C — Monthly cash flow, Months 10–18

Receipts continue to lag billed revenue by one month, while costs are paid as incurred. The table extends the original model through Month 18; figures are in euros (€).

Mo	Jobs	Billed	Cash in	Var.	Fixed	Setup	Equity	End cash
10	42	10,500	10,000	2,940	4,800	0	0	21,160
11	44	11,000	10,500	3,080	4,800	0	0	23,780
12	46	11,500	11,000	3,220	4,800	0	0	26,760
13	48	12,000	11,500	3,360	4,800	0	0	30,100
14	50	12,500	12,000	3,500	4,800	0	0	33,800
15	52	13,000	12,500	3,640	4,800	0	0	37,860
16	54	13,500	13,000	3,780	4,800	0	0	42,280
17	56	14,000	13,500	3,920	4,800	0	0	47,060
18	58	14,500	14,000	4,060	4,800	0	0	52,200

Reading the monthly cash flow

Base-case closing cash reaches €26,760 in Month 12 and €52,200 in Month 18. The €14,500 billed in Month 18 would not be collected until Month 19 under the payment assumption. Cash balances therefore reflect the timing of funding, receipts and expenditure—not accounting profit.

Cash-flow calculation

Closing cash equals opening cash plus customer receipts and funding, less variable costs, fixed costs and setup expenditure. Billed sales are shown separately from receipts.

Appendix D — Five-year and downside models

These five-year figures are conditional projections. Additional staffing and fixed-cost increases are included as volumes rise; they do not establish that customer demand will materialise. Tax, depreciation, borrowing costs and reinvestment beyond the stated assumptions are excluded.

Yr	Jobs	Fee €	Var €	Fixed €	Revenue €	Operating €
Y1	377	250	70	57,600	94,250	10,260
Y2	678	250	70	62,400	169,500	59,640
Y3	780	255	72	86,400	198,900	56,340
Y4	900	260	74	98,400	234,000	69,000
Y5	1,020	265	76	111,600	270,300	81,180

The assumed monthly capacity is 60 jobs in Years 1–2, 75 in Year 3, 90 in Year 4 and 95 in Year 5. Year 2 contains the Month 13–18 path shown above, followed by 60 jobs per month in Months 19–24. Later capacity and staffing increments would depend on operating evidence.

Downside scenarios

Scenario	Y1 jobs	Y1 operating €	18m min cash €
Base case	377	10,260	14,960
30% lower monthly jobs	263	-10,260	8,580
20% higher unit cost	377	4,982	13,112
Combined downside	263	-13,942	5,796

The 30% demand downside is applied month by month and rounded to whole jobs, giving 263 jobs in Year 1. Increasing unit variable cost by 20% raises it from €70 to €84. In the combined case, the lowest cash position is €5,796 in Month 11.

These tests show why the pilot needs to establish both paid volume and cash collection performance. A positive result in the base case is not sufficient grounds for expansion.

Appendix E — Service blueprint and controls

Appendix E presents the proposed delivery process from the customer's perspective and identifies the work performed by PortSpare and its partners. The following page shows the same process in a visual blueprint, including the interaction and visibility boundaries.

Stage	Customer action	PortSpare visible / internal work	External partner & proof
1. Request	Sends vessel/part details.	Visible: acknowledges. Internal: checks required fields.	Supplier contact provided; dated request.
2. Confirm	Approves scope, fee, partner quote.	Visible: feasible offer. Internal: checks access/time.	Supplier confirms stock and release conditions.
3. Arrange	Receives delivery plan.	Visible: collection update. Internal: assigns job owner.	Courier/agent accepts and checks access.
4. Deliver	Receives status and changes.	Visible: exception updates. Internal: tracks handoff.	Courier records collection and vessel handover.
5. Close	Checks delivery evidence/invoice.	Visible: close-out record. Internal: reconciles costs and exceptions.	Supplier/courier evidence retained in job file.

Critical handoff

The supplier-to-courier transfer is the most sensitive handoff. The coordinator must verify the correct component, collection contact, release authorisation and timing, and record confirmation of collection. If the transfer fails, the customer receives a revised status before any alternative arrangement or delivery estimate is agreed.

Proposed service measures

Measure	Proposed pilot target [A]
Valid request acknowledged	Within 30 minutes in staffed hours.
Recorded proof of handover	At least 98% of completed pilot jobs.
Permission check	Every accepted job before commitment.
Serious unresolved incident	Zero tolerated at go/no-go decision.
Paid demand for validation	At least 30 paid jobs from 4 firms within 90 days.

Appendix E (continued) — Visual service blueprint

Figure E1. PortSpare Express service blueprint (proposed): four service stages and five operating layers.

SERVICE LAYER	1 REQUEST	2 CONFIRM	3 DELIVER	4 CLOSE
PHYSICAL EVIDENCE	Request email Job reference	Written offer Fee record	Time-stamped status log	Handover proof Final invoice
CUSTOMER ACTIONS	Sends vessel, part & deadline	Approves scope, fee & quote	Receives status; responds if needed	Checks proof and invoice
LINE OF INTERACTION				
FRONTSTAGE (visible)	Acknowledges request	Presents feasible plan & fee	Reports progress and exceptions	Sends close-out confirmation
LINE OF VISIBILITY				
BACKSTAGE (hidden)	Checks vessel, part & buyer	Verifies supplier, access & partner	Tracks handoff; escalates delay	Reconciles job; closes file
LINE OF INTERNAL INTERACTION				
SUPPORT PROCESSES	Supplier provides part details	Supplier checks stock; agent checks port access	Supplier releases part; courier delivers	Courier returns handover proof
HANDOFF RECOVERY	Supplier → courier: verify part, timing and access. Check → inform buyer → approve alternative → log.			