

SMART CARGO HOLD

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING & SAFETY SYSTEM

PROJECT REPORT

I4ET

PROPOSED BY:

Nimra Khan Anel Bayangaliyeva Simon Wakpal

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Problem Identification	1
1.2 Vision and Approach	1
2. Smart Cargo Hold Environmental Monitoring & Safety System (SCHEMSS)	2
2.1 System Overview	2
2.2 Objectives	2
2.3 The ICPS Flow Chart	3
2.4 Communication Architecture	5
2.6 The ICPS System Connection	6
2.7 Test and Validation	
3. Smart Contract — Warranty and Bonus Automation for SCHEMSS	13
3.1 Motivation	
3.2 Case Definition	13
3.3 Objectives	
3.3 Design and Implementation	
3.4 Tests and Validation	
4. Conclusion	
4.1 Conclusion and Lessons Learnt	
4.2 Future Developments	
List of Figures	
Figure 1 - ICPS Flow Chart	4
Figure 2 - Cloud Computing Architecture	
Figure 3 - Fritzing PCB	
Figure 4 - Fritzing Schematic	
Figure 5 - Breadboard	
Figure 6 - Combined Setup	
Figure 7 - Arduino CodeFigure 8 - FlowFuse Architecture	
Figure 8 - FlowFuse Architecture	11 12

1. Introduction

Global grain trade relies heavily on maritime transport. Bulk carriers move massive harvests from surplus-producing regions to import-dependent nations, maintaining food availability, stabilizing prices, and supporting global food security. These vessels drastically lower per-ton shipping costs and reduce post-harvest losses—but the unique nature of grain and the structure of cargo holds introduce significant hazards that threaten both cargo quality and crew safety.

1.1 Problem Identification

Bulk carriers operate with sealed cargo holds during transit, leaving the crew unable to monitor internal conditions in real time. This creates a **blind zone** where environmental changes like **temperature spikes**, **humidity fluctuations**, **gas accumulation**, and **dust concentration** can escalate into serious threats—including **cargo spoilage**, **toxic atmospheres**, and **explosions**—without warning. The most critical and recurring threats include:

- Thermal Stratification & Hot Spots: Uneven temperature distribution inside the hold can
 create localized "hot zones" exceeding 20 °C. These pockets accelerate spoilage, promote
 mold growth, and increase the risk of self-heating. Cooler zones, by contrast, lead to
 condensation on ceiling panels, dripping moisture onto the grain below—triggering
 instability, cargo shifting, and the formation of hardened wet patches.
- **Humidity Extremes**: When relative humidity drops below 50 %, grain begins to dry out and release fine particulate dust, which is highly combustible. If humidity exceeds 70 %, it encourages microbial growth and causes the grain to cake—blocking discharge equipment and slowing unloading operations.
- Toxic Gas Build-up: Grain naturally emits carbon dioxide and may retain fumigants like
 phosphine. In the absence of ventilation and active air sampling, these gases accumulate
 in sealed holds, displacing oxygen and creating a highly toxic atmosphere. Unmonitored
 entry into such environments can cause unconsciousness, poisoning, or even death.
- Explosive Dust Risk: Dust stirred during loading or shifting can ignite from a static discharge, smoldering ember, or mechanical spark. A primary flash may trigger a secondary explosion if more dust is lifted into the air—causing catastrophic structural failure and loss of life.
- Post-Unloading Dangers: Even after cargo is discharged, dangerous gas residues and unstable residual grain piles remain. Without persistent monitoring, post-entry inspections can result in sudden collapse or exposure to toxic vapors.

1.2 Vision and Approach

As ships move toward digital transformation under Industry 4.0, the integration of Industrial Cyber-Physical Systems (ICPS) becomes central to redefining how safety, efficiency, and automation are achieved onboard. Our project leverages this paradigm to close the real-time monitoring gap within sealed cargo spaces.

By embedding intelligence directly into physical environments, SCHEMSS transforms passive grain holds into responsive systems capable of sensing, interpreting, and acting autonomously. It combines onboard sensors, wireless data transmission, and a cloud-based dashboard to establish a continuous feedback loop—making the vessel environment observable and actionable.

This transition from traditional to intelligent systems marks a significant progression in maritime automation. With SCHEMSS, we aim to enhance cargo stability, reduce operational risk, and support proactive decision-making—bridging digital computation with real-world maritime safety procedures.

2. Smart Cargo Hold Environmental Monitoring & Safety System (SCHEMSS)

2.1 System Overview

The SCHEMSS system is built on a tightly integrated flow from physical sensing to cloud-based control. At its core, the ESP8266 microcontroller collects real-time environmental data from the onboard temperature, humidity, gas, and flame sensors. These inputs are continuously monitored and compared against predefined safety thresholds within the device's embedded logic. When abnormal readings are detected—such as elevated temperature, humidity deviations, gas presence, or flame—the system immediately triggers LED indicators and a buzzer, providing local visual and audible alerts. This modular configuration is designed to function with minimal human intervention and emphasizes seamless cloud integration.

SENSORS	ACTUATORS
DHT11 (Temp & Humidity Sensor)	Extraction fan, Red LED (temperature), Blue LED (humidity)
MQ-6 Gas Sensor	Extraction fan, Green LED (gas detection)
Flame Sensor	Yellow LED (flame), Passive Buzzer (audible alarm)

Table 1 - Sensors and Actuators

2.2 Objectives

The core operational goals of the system are as follows:

Maintaining Environmental Stability and Preserving Cargo Integrity

The integrated **temperature and humidity sensors** monitor variations in hold conditions that can compromise grain quality. If the temperature exceeds safe limits or relative humidity falls outside the optimal range, SCHEMSS activates visual and audible alerts. This

early warning mechanism helps mitigate risks of mold growth, condensation, cargo caking, and spoilage—ultimately preserving structural integrity and discharge efficiency.

· Hazardous Gas Detection and Crew Safety

Toxic or flammable gases such as carbon dioxide and residual phosphine can accumulate in sealed holds. The MQ-6 gas sensor performs continuous air sampling and issues alerts using a **blue LED** and buzzer if gas concentrations rise to hazardous levels. This functionality offers critical protection against oxygen displacement, poisoning, or explosion.

Fire Risk Monitoring and Rapid Response

The **flame sensor** provides real-time fire detection by identifying the visual presence of an open flame. Upon detection, SCHEMSS immediately activates the **red** LED and buzzer, enabling rapid response protocols and minimizing the risk of escalation.

Real-Time Remote Monitoring

Data from all sensors is transmitted via MQTT to a Node-RED dashboard on FlowFuse. This allows ship operators to monitor the cargo environment remotely and intervene proactively.

2.3 The ICPS Flow Chart

The ICPS flowchart outlines the logic structure of the SCHEMSS system, mapping how data is sensed, evaluated, and acted upon. It illustrates the full operational sequence—from sensor initialization to environmental analysis, alert generation, and system response. All decision branches and control actions can be traced visually in the diagram below.

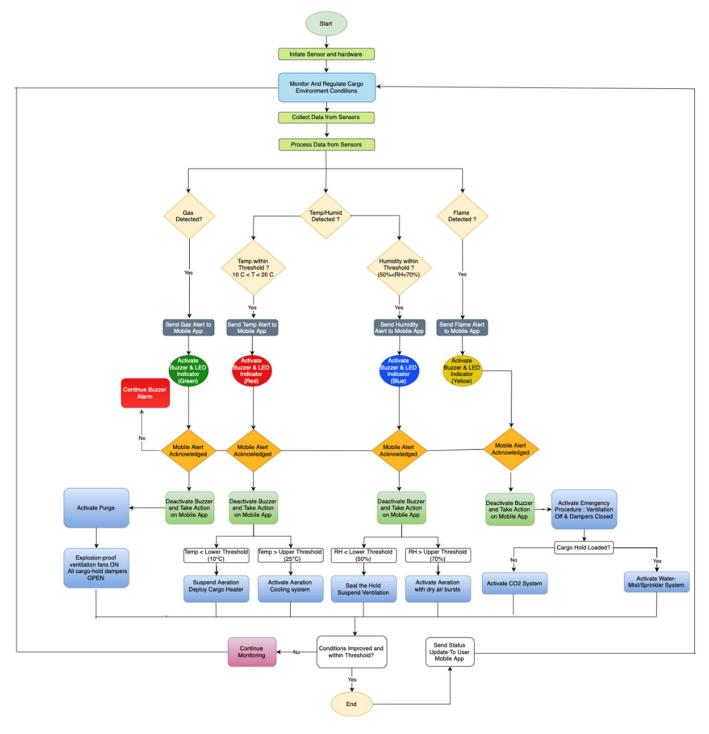


Figure 1 - ICPS Flow Chart

2.4 Communication Architecture

As shown in the diagram, the SCHEMSS communication system is structured in three clear layers. At the base, the **Device Layer** includes sensors such as the DHT11 (for temperature and humidity), MQ-6 gas sensor, flame sensor, and actuators like RGB LEDs and a buzzer—all interfaced through the ESP8266 microcontroller. These components are physically connected and interact directly onboard.

The **Routing Layer** bridges the device-level hardware with the cloud using standard internet and MQTT protocol symbols, illustrating how real-time data is transmitted wirelessly from the ship.

At the top, the **Cloud Layer** is represented by FlowFuse, which handles visualization and control logic through the Node-RED platform. Together, these three layers illustrate the end-to-end flow of data, from onboard collection to remote monitoring.

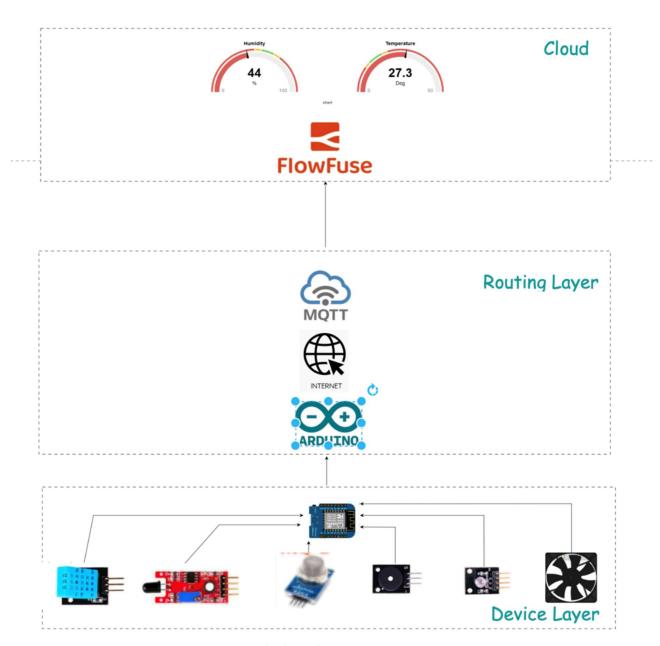


Figure 2 - Cloud Computing Architecture

2.6 The ICPS System Connection

The following diagram illustrates the physical layout and wiring of the SCHEMSS system components. Sensors and actuators are connected to the ESP8266-based microcontroller using jumper wires and mounted on a breadboard. This wiring configuration ensures real-time data acquisition and reliable communication with the cloud infrastructure.

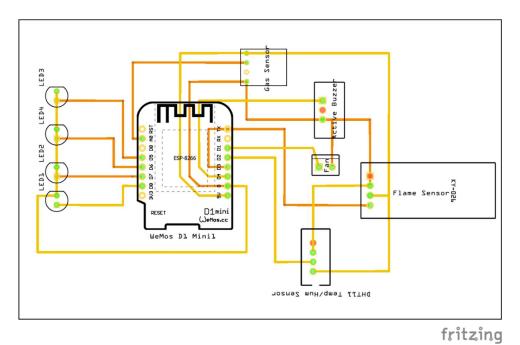


Figure 3 - Fritzing PCB

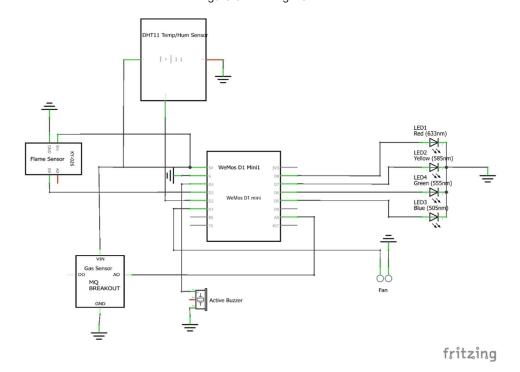


Figure 4 - Fritzing Schematic

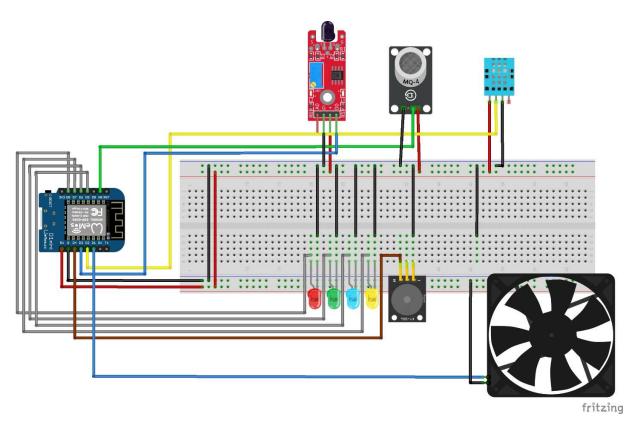
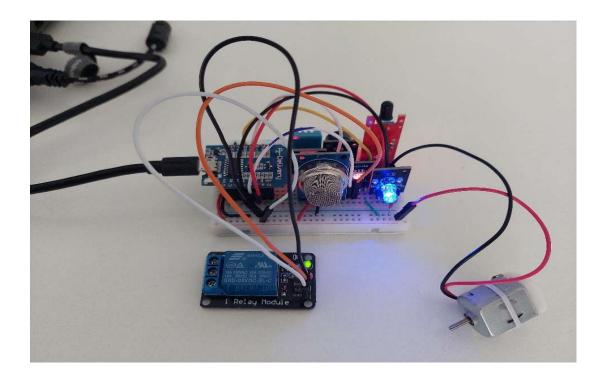
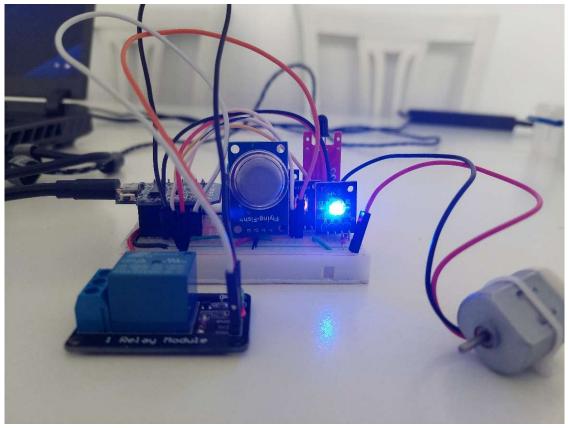


Figure 5 - Breadboard





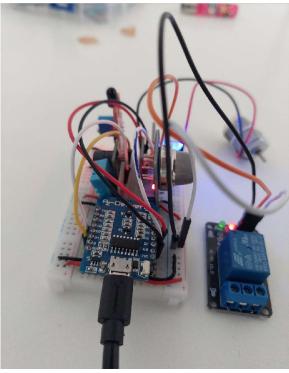


Figure 6 - Combined Setup

2.7 Test and Validation

These images display the real-time execution of our SCHEMSS system, which runs on a WeMos D1 Mini (ESP8266) microcontroller. The Serial Monitor output confirms successful communication with all connected sensors and demonstrates how the system detects and responds to environmental hazards—including gas presence, flame detection, and abnormal temperature/humidity—by publishing MQTT alerts and triggering corresponding LEDs and buzzer indicators.

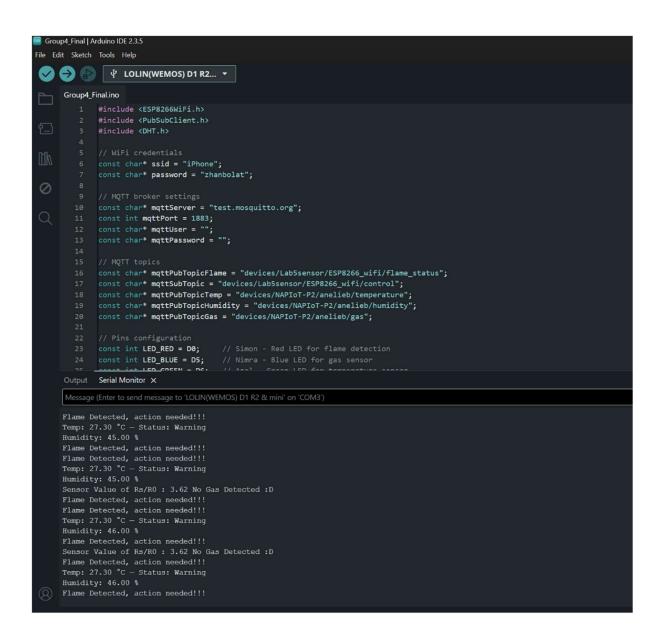


Figure 7 - Arduino Code

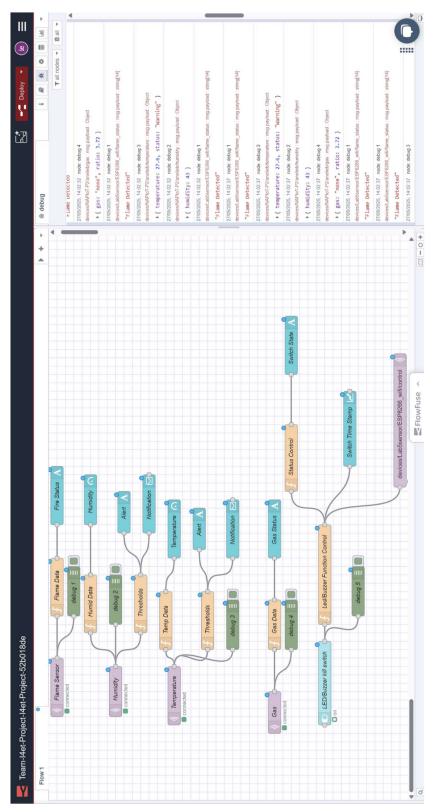


Figure 8 - FlowFuse Architecture

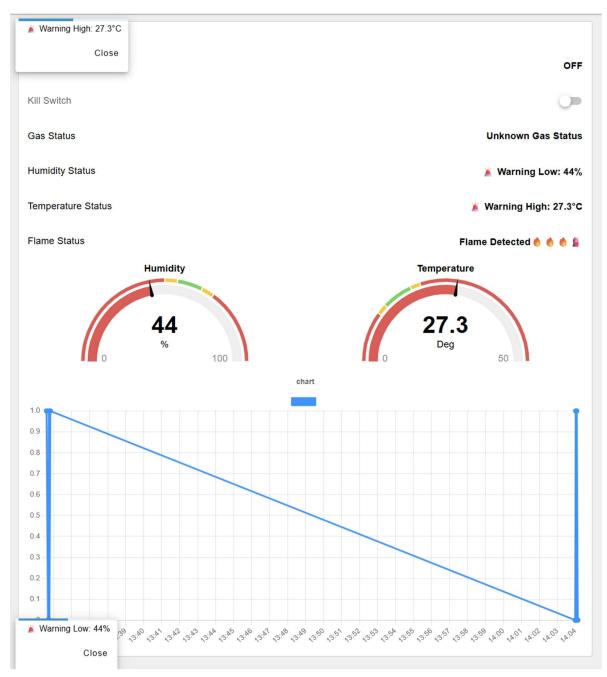


Figure 9 - Dashboard

3. Smart Contract — Warranty and Bonus Automation for SCHEMSS

3.1 Motivation

As the maritime industry embraces digitalization, ensuring safety and reliability in sealed cargo holds becomes increasingly vital. These environments, especially when transporting sensitive goods, demand constant monitoring to detect hazards such as fire, toxic gas accumulation, or humidity temperature related damage. The SCHEMSS system was developed in response to these needs, combining advanced sensors with automated digital agreements to maintain high safety standards. Traditional warranty and support systems—dependent on paperwork, human validation, and trust—are inadequate for such critical applications. Our motivation is to offer a robust and transparent solution that enforces accountability, simplifies support, and incentivizes performance, all while minimizing disputes and downtime.

3.2 Case Definition

We install three essential environmental monitoring sensors—TEMP_HUM (temperature and humidity), GAS (toxic gas detection), and FLAME (fire detection)—within the sealed cargo holds of a client's vessel. After payment confirmation, a smart contract named SCHEMSSWarranty is deployed on the Ethereum blockchain. This contract governs a two-year warranty period for each sensor. If no faults are reported during this time, the warranty naturally expires. Vessels operating without faults for at least 90 consecutive days are eligible for a bonus. Faults can be reported by the vessel owner, triggering a verification process by the company. Upon confirmation, a full refund is issued for the faulty sensor if it falls within the warranty period.

3.3 Objectives

The SCHEMSS smart contract introduces a fully automated framework for managing environmental sensor installations onboard cargo vessels. Designed to enforce warranties and incentivize operational excellence without human intervention, the system offers unique benefits to both the service provider and the vessel owner. By shifting all conditions and responses into blockchain-executed logic, the contract ensures transparency, fairness, and efficiency.

The table below outlines the distinct but complementary objectives for each party:

Stakeholder	Objectives
Company (Service Provider)	 Enforce warranty using on-chain timestamps. Log installation metadata for transparency. Automate payments, bonuses, and refunds. Remove paperwork and reduce claim disputes. Improve service credibility through transparent processes. Enhance service reputation through objective, automated post-installation support.
Vessel Owner (Client)	 Access tamper-proof installation and warranty records. Report faults via secure contract functions. Receive refunds automatically for verified faults. Earn bonuses for fault-free operation. Benefit from a fully digital and frictionless support process.

Table 2 - Objectives

This shared framework creates a mutually beneficial system: the company minimizes risk and overhead, while the vessel owner enjoys responsive, secure, and transparent equipment support. SCHEMSS thereby establishes not just a technical solution, but a scalable governance model for digital maritime operations in the industry 4.0 era.

3.3 Design and Implementation

The SCHEMSSWarranty smart contract, developed in Solidity, facilitates the management of sensor installations using blockchain-based automation. It integrates lifecycle tracking, payment logic, and operational incentives into one cohesive system.

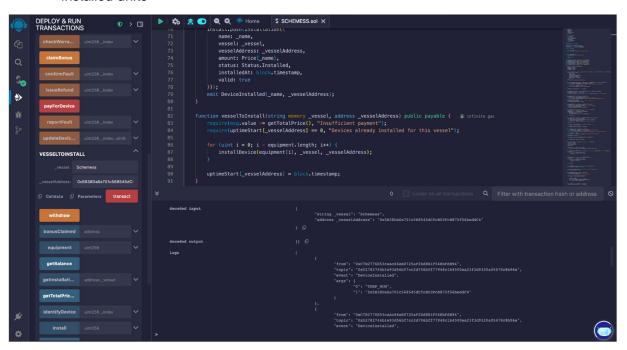
- Automated Payment Validation: Verifies full payment upon installation request. Logs installation details including vessel address and timestamp.
- **Sensor Registration:** Records metadata on-chain for each installed sensor, including status, price, and warranty timestamp.
- Fault Reporting and Confirmation: Allows vessel owners to report issues only during the Operational phase. Faults must be confirmed by the company before action is taken.
- Warranty Enforcement: Tracks warranty validity based on installation time. Expiration disables refund eligibility.
- **Refund Execution:** On fault confirmation within warranty, full refund is transferred to the vessel's address securely.

- Bonus Distribution: If no fault occurs in the first 90 days, the vessel can claim a 1 ETH
 performance reward.
- **Secure Fund Management:** Only the contract owner can withdraw or manage funds. Ether-based transactions are verified with noReentrancy protection.
- Data Access Functions: Functions like identifyDevice() and getInstallationsByVessel() provide full traceability.
- **Security Features:** Includes onlyOwner and noReentrancy modifiers. Disallows direct payments with disabled receive() and fallback().

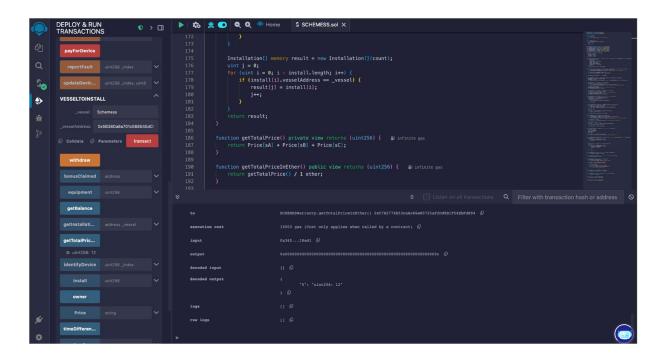
This design ensures an end-to-end, transparent, and automated support mechanism for safety-critical maritime systems.

3.4 Tests and Validation

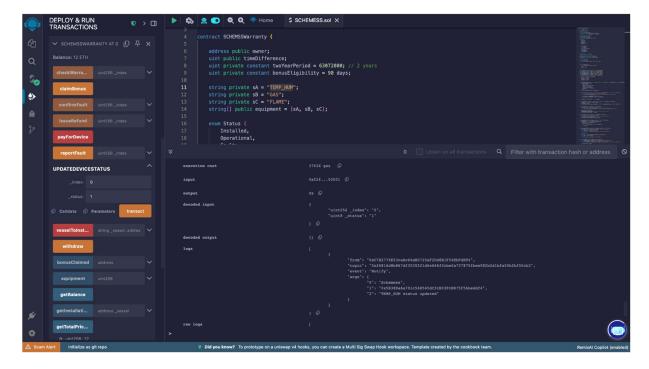
1) Demonstrated payment for the full **SCHEMSS** sensor package by executing vesselToInstall() with 'Schemess' wallet the vessel name and address 0x5B38...bdC4, triggering successful registration and on-chain logging of all installed units



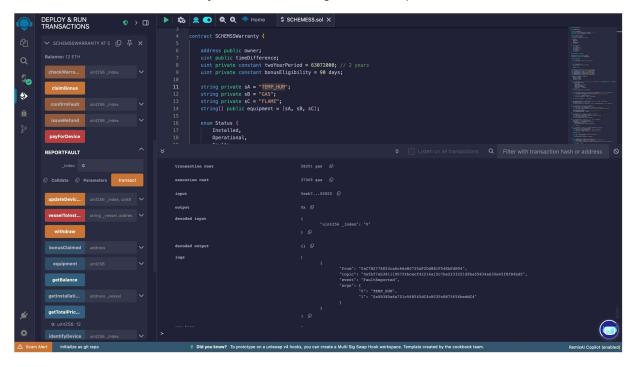
2) Successfully retrieved the total cost of all three SCHEMSS components (TEMP_HUM, GAS, FLAME), which equals 12 ETH, using the getTotalPriceInEther() function



3) Executed the updateDeviceStatus() function to change the status of the first sensor (index 0) on the vessel "Schemess" from Installed to Operational, enabling it to be eligible for fault reporting as per the smart contract's logic

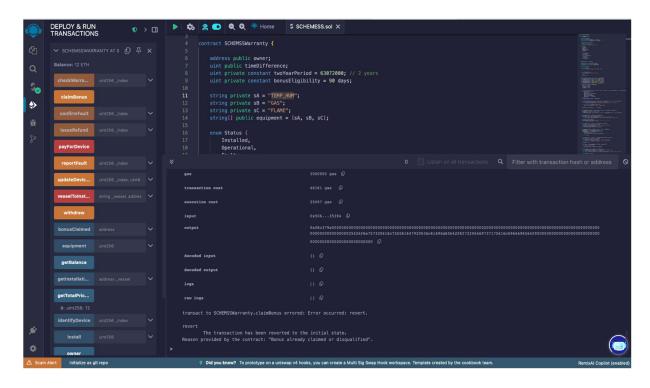


4) Executed the reportFault() function for the temperature sensor (TEMP_HUM, index 0), which was previously updated to the Operational state, successfully triggering a transition to the Faulty state and emitting the FaultReported event

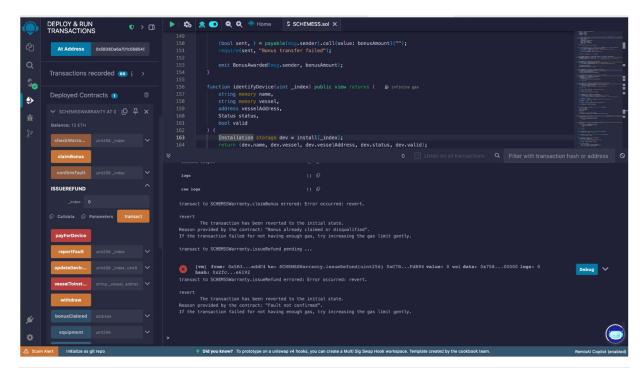


5) Attempted to execute the claimBonus() function, but the transaction reverted with the message "Bonus already claimed or disqualified" because a fault was reported within

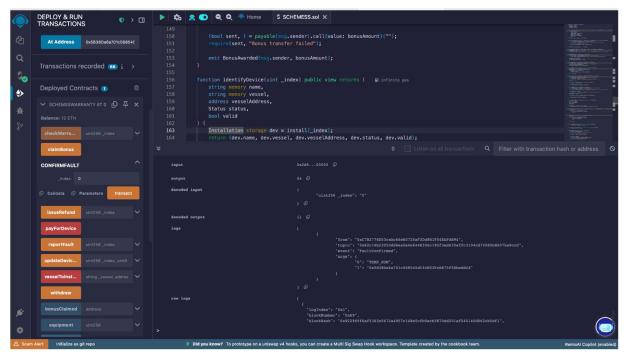
the first 90 days, which automatically disqualifies the vessel from receiving the performance bonus



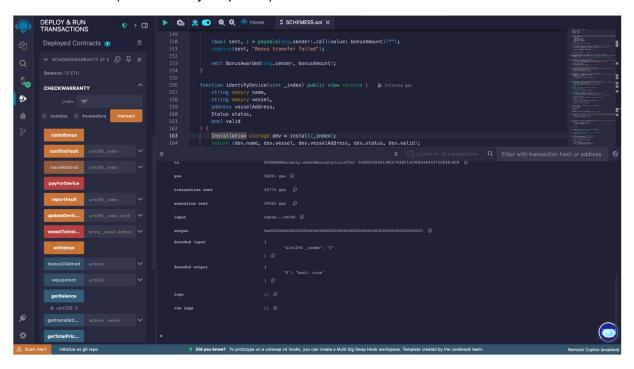
6) Attempted to execute issueRefund() without the fault being confirmed by the contract owner, which caused the transaction to revert with the error: "Fault not confirmed". This



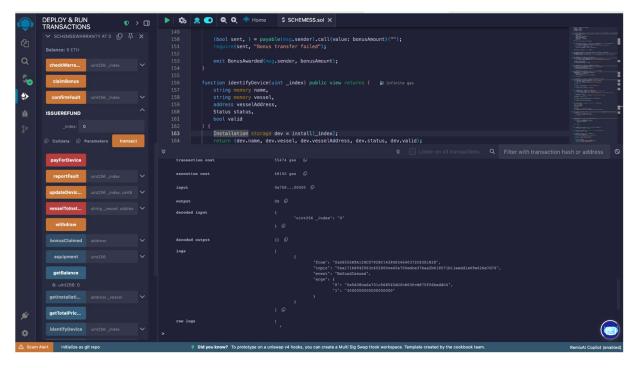
- safeguards the refund logic and ensures only validated fault cases are eligible for reimbursement.
- 7) Executed the confirmFault() function for index 0, officially verifying the reported fault for the TEMP_HUM sensor. The log confirms event "FaultConfirmed" was emitted, meaning the sensor's status has transitioned to Confirmed_Fault, making it eligible for refund processing



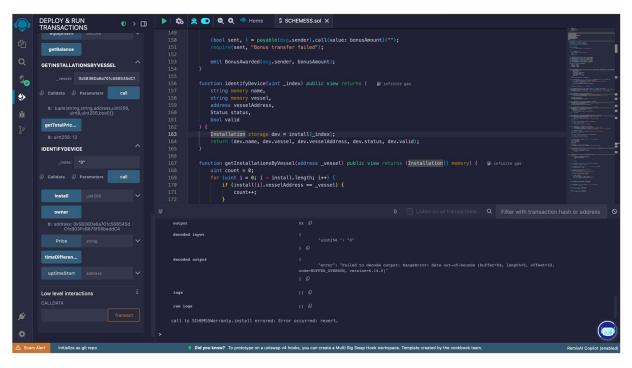
8) Successfully called checkWarranty(0) to verify the warranty status of the TEMP_HUM sensor before issuing a refund. The returned value true confirms the warranty is still active (within the 2-year period).



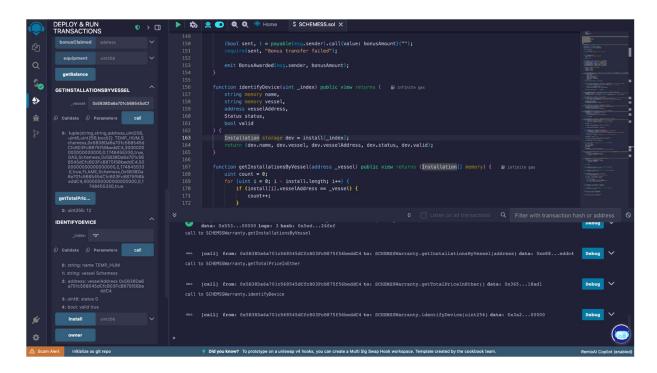
9) Successfully issued a refund for the confirmed faulty sensor (index 0) using the issueRefund() function



 Attempted to call the getInstallationsByVessel() function using an address that had no sensors installed



11) Accessed all relevant sensor records stored on-chain



4. Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion and Lessons Learnt

The SCHEMSS project delivered an autonomous cargo hold safety system that merges real-time environmental sensing, cloud-based monitoring, and smart contract automation to address critical maritime hazards. Through precise integration of embedded hardware and cloud communication, we enabled early detection of temperature, humidity spikes, toxic gases, and fire—without human intervention. The smart contract, developed in Solidity, enforces transparent warranty claims and performance incentives, reducing disputes and ensuring operational accountability. Testing under real conditions revealed edge cases that transformed our system logic and proved the importance of validating beyond simulation.

We learned that building reliable Industrial Cyber-Physical Systems demands coordination at every layer—hardware, software, network, and logic. Solidity development taught us to think in deterministic rules, where trust is coded and every state transition must be secure and auditable. Real-time safety systems must be proactive and redundant, especially in unmanned, high-risk spaces. This project has sparked our interest and serves as a clear stepping stone into the world of blockchain and automation. Most importantly, we realized that safety is not just a technical objective—it is an ethical obligation. With SCHEMSS, we designed not just a system, but a responsibility.

4.2 Future Developments

Building on the success of SCHEMSS, future enhancements will focus on expanding both the functionality and scalability of the system. One of the primary directions is improving communication robustness and system modularity. We recommend implementing UART (Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter) communication to establish a reliable serial link between the Raspberry Pi and ESP32 microcontroller. This two-stage architecture will allow the Raspberry Pi to act as a local decision-making hub, collecting, processing, and logging sensor data from the ESP32 in real time, while also managing data relays to the cloud or blockchain.

The UART interface offers several benefits for industrial environments, including asynchronous bidirectional data transfer, ease of debugging, and low hardware overhead. It also allows future firmware upgrades or sensor commands to be issued dynamically from a user dashboard running on the Raspberry Pi, further improving maintainability and remote control. This separation of duties between data acquisition (ESP32) and supervisory control (Raspberry Pi) would enhance the flexibility, error handling, and resilience of the system.

Additional improvements under consideration include:

Predictive Maintenance Integration: Leveraging machine learning algorithms to analyze historical sensor data for anomaly detection and early failure prediction.

Scalability for Fleet Deployment: Enabling support for multiple vessels and bulk sensor installations from a unified dashboard, managed via cloud or decentralized interfaces.