



The Extended Gateway

Anyone who has been following the (logistics) press over the last few days will not have been able to avoid it: the Flanders Extended Gateway is the new challenge for Flanders (Vlaanderen) as a top logistics location. But what is the concept of the Extended Gateway exactly?

One observation is that a large number of ports in the Hamburg-Le Havre range have made major investments in radically expanding their (container) capacity. As a result, many questions remain as yet unanswered: how do all these containers reach their destinations inland, when and where is a container opened to add value to the goods, do logistics activities belong inside or outside the port, etc.? The logistics region that can give a satisfactory answer to these and many other questions, can develop a significant lead in attracting new logistics operations.

With the assistance from the Flemish institute for logistics, Flanders has recently been talking about the concept of the Extended Gateways. The Flemish logistics landscape is an uncut diamond: 4 sea ports, an airport and about fifteen multimodal terminals are interlinked by a remarkably dense network of roads, railways and navigable waterways and all this within an area of barely 50 km by 150 km. This rough diamond still needs some polishing: the multimodal network is still inadequately integrated, there are still a few missing links left in the infrastructure and the users of the infrastructure themselves are not yet sufficiently aware of the multimodal capabilities. The vision of the Extended Gateways is been clearly focused on the further integration of the multimodal landscape into a network of corridors for "top locations". Through this, the ideal location alongside the corridor for each type of logistics activity can be determined according to the type of goods; for example, close to the gateway for very large products and close to the final destination/consumer for time-critical products. By using the corridors of the Extended Gateways network to their full extent, the total cost of logistics operations would be minimal. This is partly due to the natural clustering of activities that takes place along the corridors, as a result of which the flow of goods in the hinterland network becomes denser. Denser flows also mean many more possibilities for multimodal transportation and for cooperation between companies, all of which have a favourable impact on the total logistics costs for the companies concerned.

A perfect example of this is the logistics port Limburg, the Extended Gateway between the port of Antwerp and the port of Genk. Due to the good multimodal opening-up of this corridor and the willingness of a number of prominent companies to cooperate, it has already been shown that the concept really does work.

Alex van Breedam
Managing Director, Flemish Logistics Institute

to the core location for that day. This can differ per distribution region. At this location, the goods are combined and then transported to the delivery addresses by the drivers. The planning process at DHL Freight is fully computer-driven and provides enough work to keep four people busy all day with Planning as well as Customer Service activities. Now, after six months of an intensive collaboration where all parties have invested a great deal of energy into the integration of both distribution networks, we can say, although with some degree of caution, that the mission has been accomplished. "Both Electrolux and Willem van Rijn are extremely satisfied. DHL's performance has been good and the costs have dropped for both customers. The challenge for DHL is to establish good communication among all the DHL employees involved, so that customer awareness remains a top priority for this group," explains Van Berkel. Wim Snoek of DHL Exel Supply Chain adds, "By this we also mean the employees in the warehouse, since the working hours at the warehouse in Amsterdam have also been expanded considerably in order to be able to meet the

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required service levels. The growing amount of traffic in the Randstad also requires an increasing degree of flexibility from the organization. At DHL Exel Supply Chain in Amsterdam, it is now possible to load and unload from early in the morning until late in the evening. This is done in an attempt to relieve the strain on the transport network as much as possible."

Naturally, Van Berkel hopes that this integration will serve as an example for other DHL customers. "We have many more customers for whom large volume shipments and warehousing are still being done separately. We are now trying to show these customers that the synergy advantages of integration with others in their industry can mean huge advantages for them. DHL has since proven that integration saves money and helps create environmental and social benefits. Which organization isn't interested in these factors today? Besides, it is exciting to sit down with the competition, and to know that in spite of conflicting interests you can still arrive at a collaborative effort. This is something we are pretty proud of at DHL!"

Michiel van Berkel
(DHL Freight), Allied ten Brink
(DHL Exel Supply Chain)
and Wim Snoek
(DHL Exel Supply Chain)

major role in the negotiations. In the current climate of corporate social responsibility, this was not an insignificant argument. "In the discussions that were held with both parties, the priority was always that the performance to which both customers had become accustomed from DHL must not suffer as a result of integration. The accent of this performance was to remain on the service from the drivers and the personal approach to customers. And this was precisely where the immediate challenges lay in this situation for DHL. Back at the office we can obviously come up with a nice case on paper, but it must also be something we can execute," says Van Berkel.

Drivers are your company's business card

Since last February, the daily routine for DHL, Electrolux and Willem van Rijn has been as follows: Every day the planning department of DHL Freight examines where the core for that day is in terms of distribution volumes per region departing from the two locations. Willem van Rijn's warehousing activities are handled by DHL Exel Supply Chain in Amsterdam. Electrolux is located at Alphen a/d Rijn. The goods are transported