

Dryport evaluation per work package

WP 3 Financial and land assessment decision making

A hugely successful international conference held in Edinburgh in October 2010 was a key moment for Dryport in terms of discussing major issues, gaining an international audience and raising the profile of the project.

Organised by Dryport's Scottish partners, TRI Napier and SEStran, the conference was the UK's first ever Dryport Conference; it provided a platform for more than 40 top-level speakers from around the world and was attended by over 130 industry professionals and academics from 29 countries all over the world.

Among a host of prestigious and high-profile speakers were: Lord Tony Berkeley, chairman of the UK's Rail Freight Group; Dr Charles Kunaka, a senior trade specialist in the World Bank's International Trade Department; Bruce Lambert, the executive director of the Institute for Trade and Transportation Studies in the US; and Dr Tengfei Wang, economic affairs officer at the Transport Division of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

The many ways in which dryports can be conceived, designed, developed, operated and optimised to support innovative and effective supply chains were discussed in detail, and delegates had the opportunity to exchange concepts, ideas and opinions. The research, industry experiences and case studies presented at the conference provided a global perspective on the challenges in intermodal hinterland strategies and dryports – and demonstrated the relevance of cooperation between private sector, institutions and planning authorities.

While the conference highlighted the value of effective intermodal strategies as a contributor towards a more sustainable way of freight transport, it also became clear that new and improved intermodal solutions require political will to drive developments.

In an important follow-up to the conference, TRI Napier worked with the Swedish Handelshögskolan (school of economy) to produce, revise and publish more than 30 papers in two magazines and a book.

SEStran held meetings with stakeholders to present ideas and discuss operational issues, including a preview of barge operations that could provide connections between small and large ports in the Forth Estuary.

SEStran also undertook feasibility studies utilising the Scottish Transport appraisal guidance (STAG) to investigate whether there is a business case for reopening the disused rail track linking the ports of Rosyth and Methil to the existing rail network. A Freight Routing Strategy for the South East of Scotland, including a map for use by logistics companies, was developed; this study also included the development of a Freight Model for the region.

The Scottish partners also commissioned research and analysis studies into consolidation centres, sustainable freight distribution, and rail freight development and marketing, and established relationships with the freight and port sectors. Meetings took place with Babcock to discuss planning proposals for the export and import of containers at Rosyth.

SEStran and TRI also hosted a visit to Edinburgh by the Dryport lead partner, which included study trips to Rosyth and Grangemouth, and gave a joint presentation to the Scottish Supply Chain Forum.

During the period of Dryport, SEStran also became a partner in the EU Interreg Foodport project and the LO Pinod project.

Do planners understand the needs of the logistics industry? And does the logistics industry understand the restraints and challenges faced by the planning authorities?

The Haven Gateway and Babergh District Council, joint English partners in Dryport, recognised that many stakeholders are not familiar with the preconditions for planners, or the fact that infrastructure planning can be a long and slow process with many different bodies involved.

In response, the two partners have written a planning guide for logistics operators, and a logistics guide for planners, to help the two sides understand each other better.

The English partners have also sourced and gathered together valuable data to create a Destination and Origin Study. The pattern of containerised traffic moving in both directions between the Haven Ports and the UK hinterland has never before been scientifically mapped; this study, carried out by MDS Transmodal on behalf of the two partners, will identify key traffic flows by road, rail and feeder ship, with the main focus being on Felixstowe.

The aim was to establish real evidence, as opposed to forecasts or perceptions. The study will also predict future trends in line with market expectations, to help provide a robust evidence base for the development of a potential dryport.

The partners of Dryport met during the UK's Multimodal conference held in Birmingham in April 2010; a key message to come out during this workshop was that dryports as part of innovative supply chains can – and must – tick the three 'E' boxes, meeting the requirements of Environment, Economy and Efficiency. If one of those is missing, then so, probably, is the interest in using such a facility.

Further to that, anyone seeking to set up or expand a dryport needs to get that 'three Es' message across to local authorities, delegates agreed – because, when it comes to the crunch, strategic planning is done by local councils. It is important that councils and planning authorities are on board as early as possible.

Dryports may have their 'green' virtues on a global scale, but local opposition can be the biggest hurdle to getting them developed, the workshop heard.

Where should future dryport sites be established, and under what conditions? These questions were considered at a national seminar held in Sweden in November 2010.

More than 100 people attended, including a large delegation from the private sector. A key focus for any region is to debate and decide where to concentrate infrastructural investments in the cargo/freight/logistics sector, and to evaluate the efficiency of individual operations at a local level.

The Port of Gothenburg explained its concept of ranking all the national logistics centres/ freight combi-terminals, in order to get an overview of which sites have the potential or opportunity rail transport of freight, for example.

On a regional level, Dryport partners have worked to take on board findings from the project. Both Falköping (Sweden) and Emmen/Coevorden (Netherlands) have employed a specialist marketing officer to 'sell' the potential of their area for dryport and related logistics activities. There has also been an exchange of strategy documents between partners. The Port of Zeebrugge is also considering taking the same action.

Drenthe, the region that includes Emmen/Coevorden, has taken steps to open up private freight terminals to play a role in the partners' Dryport strategy.

A site assessment workshop held in Brugge in May 2009 was attended by a large delegation of West Flemish companies and Dryport partners. One of the guest speakers, Patrick Installé from Efico, informed about the carbon-neutral coffee import centre as an example of sustainable warehousing and transporting. Yet another speaker, Theo Notteboom professor in Logistics in Antwerp, can be considered as a well renowned specialist in sustainable logistics.

In the morning before the workshop, a delegation from the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce (Haven Gateway) met representatives of the VOKA Chamber of Commerce West Flanders to discuss B2B relations between the two. This led directly to the B2B visit by Belgian business and logistics leaders to Suffolk later in the Dryport project.