

Dryport evaluation per work package

WP 7 Socioeconomic aspects of a dryport establishment

The issues and challenges involved in setting up a successful dryport have been tackled head on in a major research paper produced by Dryport's German partners, the Institute of Labour and Economy (IAW) of the University of Bremen

The study, 'Governance and Conflict Resolution in Dryport Planning', set out to establish how and under what conditions dryports can be successful; and under what conditions dryports can work efficiently as a complementary partner for seaports and as a reasonable option for future-oriented and sustainable logistics.

The report considers dryports in the context of spatial and environmental issues, functions and services and how they are combined and integrated, competitive issues and the economic dimension, and governance issues and how an all-winners result can be achieved.

The researchers focused on four case studies within the Dryport partners' areas: Bremen/Bremerhaven; Felixstowe/Haven Gateway; Gothenburg/Falköping; and Zeebrugge.

Amongst its conclusions, the study reported that the process of planning, implementing, building and operating a dryport is a process of multiple integration:

- Integration into the logistics chain (the spatial and functional dimension);
- Integration into single companies' strategies (the economic dimension); and
- Integration into intra- and interregional structures (the governance dimension).

IAW Bremen joined Dryport in June 2010, later than the other partners, and the project was extended by six months to allow this new partner to play a significant role, focusing on the socioeconomic aspects of a dryport establishment as well as governance questions.

The IAW partners visited several other Dryport partners to collect information about governance and stakeholder strategies, and also received input from other partners.

Data and relevant information for the case studies were collected and research questions developed and assessed. Interviews with port authorities and terminal operators went ahead in 2010/11.

The report is completed and available for download from the web site.

The Haven Gateway completed its Economic Impact of Ports study and this was issued to a small steering group of local strategic officers at district and county council level. The study established the economic value of the ports, maritime and logistics sector for the area – providing the evidence for the planning authorities to understand the need to improve their knowledge of the sector.

The Haven Gateway also carried out an Employment Land Review – it was decided that the best way to identify available sites for a dryport was to carry out an investigation into what employment sites are available within the sub-region and what they could be used for. This provided a ‘shortlist’ of potential sites for a dryport.

The Dryport annual conference for 2011 was hosted by the Haven Gateway and Babergh. The focus was on the ‘political’ aspect – i.e. bringing together politicians from all of the Dryport partner areas to exchange ideas, describe what they operate or don’t operate, and why, talk about the problems they have come across and how they got over them, and share their views on port and dryport projects and freight issues.

Broadly, the conclusions of the conference were:

- Sharing problems and experiences with other Dryport partners and colleagues, we can find ideas and solutions.
- Anticipating – thinking and planning ahead – is vital if the ports and logistics sector is to be ready for the upturn in world trade.
- More communication is needed between all levels of society, business and politics.
- Infrastructure needs – road, rail and sea – need to be considered together, in the same planning process.
- Ports would create efficiencies by working more closely together – but often they are restricted by competition regulations.

On the second day of the annual conference, the Dryport partners visited Hutchison Ports UK’s Port of Felixstowe to take a detailed look at a range of areas including rail management, rail infrastructure, IT, vessel loading, and the systems required to handle very large volumes of containers on a day-to-day basis.

The VOKA Chamber of Commerce West Flanders formed a platform for local business people about logistics and transport – and Dryport issues have been covered in its work within maritime and logistics.

The meeting sessions provide a forum of international entrepreneurs that encourages the exchange of views and collaboration on freight transport, covering issues ranging from e-custom to empty containers to economic prospects and there were group fact-finding visits to local retailers and businesses. A key aim is to prevent businesses from getting stuck in a rut, using the same pattern of operations; it emphasises new and alternative transport modalities.