



Artist's impression of an inland container terminal with a throughput of 200.000 TEU per year

Container-terminal concept offers advantages of scale

'An innovative new container-terminal concept is enjoying increasing popularity, not only by seaports, but also by inland terminals. Frans Koch, senior consultant and director of Koch Adviesgroep, explains: 'The great advantages of this concept include its technical and economical scalability.'

Three years ago, Koch Adviesgroep started developing new ideas for major container terminals accommodating large, ocean-going container vessels from China, Brazil, South-Korea and Japan, among others. These developments attracted a lot of attention, also from unexpected quarters, namely inland navigation. Koch: 'Inland container ports are characterised by their diversity and, obviously, their needs vary as well.'

Impulse to manufacturing industry

The multidisciplinary advisory engineering agency F. Koch BV, with offices in Goes and Terneuzen, offers a very wide range of services, ensuring a well-filled order portfolio, even in the current challenging market situation. The organisation's own Product & Process Innovation department, which was set up in 2010, has developed a whole new system for container handling. It is currently enjoying a lot of attention on a global scale. And it could involve a major impulse to the manufacturing industry in the Netherlands particularly.

Frans Koch explained: 'We initially developed the concept of New Generation Integrated Container Terminals to solve problems experienced by container-handling seaports. Several major terminal operators and port authorities around the world are currently investigating the feasibility of implementing the NGICT concept.'

Universal solution

An unexpected and fascinating development involves the interest that has arisen by inland terminals. 'Obviously, the transshipment of containers towards the hinterland is providing them with great advantages. In fact, our new concept provides a universal solution for every scale: from sea-port terminals with a length of over one thousand metres and a throughput of two million TEU per year down to small-scale inland terminals with a throughput of 40,000 TEU per year. And all sizes in-between. For example, we are currently working on a design for an inland mega hub. This is rather like a small seaport terminal, with a throughput of one million TEU per year. Ninety percent of transshipment takes place between small and large inland barges of the 500-TEU class.' Interesting to note is that all parts of the Koch concept are protected by patents, allowing manufacturers intending to seize this opportunity to further develop, manufacture and market the concept to safely invest in it.