



Evolution Terminals has secured sufficient land in the Vlissingen port area that provides for future expansion potential if required.

Evolution Terminals signed a long lease agreement with North Sea Port in December 2020 for the exclusive use of 143,132m² of prime industrial land in North Sea Port's Vlissingen port area to construct and operate a new liquid bulk storage terminal and jetty. With the permitting process at a mature stage with all request applications to be submitted before summer, the time is now right for Evolution Terminal to explain more about the company's plans.

PortNews talks with Chief Commercial Officer Jan Thijs Maatman and Managing Director Arron Smyth. "After announcing our plans to establish a liquid bulk terminal at North Sea Port, we have been quietly working hard to develop our project initiative", Mr Smyth says. "In the past there have been several ambitious though unsuccessful projects on the very same location in the Vlissingen port area, and all of them ultimately turned out to be unviable for one reason or another. It was therefore our decision to remain low-profile in the first phases of the project. This does not mean that we have been idle though. On the contrary, we have taken several steps in our project, for example through conceptualising various layouts

and designs and carrying out studies to support permitting, whilst in parallel also tenaciously working on commercialising our plans via discussions with several potential launching customers and strategic partners to ensure a multimillion dollar investment like ours will be successful."

Green fuels

Evolution anticipates building up to circa 600,000m³ of liquid bulk storage capacity, in phases if necessary, and a new deep-water jetty with a draught potential of up to 17m, capable of receiving seagoing vessels, barges, and coasters. The terminal will also be served by truck and rail tanker loading and unloading infrastructure for road and railway connections to the hinterlands, and will comply with all safety and environmental standards under the latest regulations. Due to innovative design and ensuring full compliance with all the latest regulations and guidelines including PGS 29 safety legislation, Evolution is planning storage tanks to accommodate a wide range of bulk liquid product classes so that future customers may have the ability to switch product types in response to changes in downstream market dynamics. However, unique to this project is that the terminal will be the first terminal in Europe to focus solely on the storage of green and renewable fuels, without the legacy of being attached to hydrocarbon-related operations and activities. Additionally, alongside the more traditional model of long-term storage contracts, the terminal could also offer capacity under shorter-term and revolving commitments, providing suitable customers with super flexible tank rental agreements. Evolution has secured sufficient land area that provides for future expansion potential if required. In this regard,

the company will also explore potentially synergistic relationships with existing industrial tenants within the port for the provision of local storage capacity and product handling.

Front runners

“Evolution Terminals really is an international project with investors and management originating from Canada, Europe, and the UK,” Mr Maatman explains. “Everyone is really enthusiastic about the plan to construct a terminal exclusively for green and sustainable fuels at North Sea Port. In the energy transition, green fuels are going to play an important role and terminals that can offer storage and bunkering facilities to support this development are needed. All over the world companies will be producing green fuels such as green methanol, ammonia, and hydrogen, and we are seeing large shipping and maritime companies like Maersk making huge investments in green-fuelled vessels for the future. With their investment in the development of this green fuels terminal, our investors are leading the way in supporting this pivot towards a decarbonised future. In fact, they are creating a new market and concept as there are no fully green hubs for liquid bulk yet and with the current global initiatives to decarbonise and achieve net zero, we have the right momentum and macroeconomic environment to fulfil this initiative.” According to Mr Smyth, one of the issues in this case is the lack of real substance and delivery in place of ambitious soundbytes and objectives that may not be technologically or economically feasible in the near term. “The current situation for the transition towards green fuels looks a bit like the start of the offshore wind industry with scattered knowledge, and many smaller companies involved in the first stages, with the larger companies unable to step in until projects scale, whereas today the offshore wind industry has been taken over by large companies. We expect that this will also happen in the development of the green fuels markets, but three times as fast. It is our goal to play a role in this by creating part of the ecosystem, with Evolution Terminals positioning itself to be a future hub for the import and transshipment of green fuels into Europe.”

Various reasons

According to Mr Maatman, there are various reasons why Evolution Terminal decided to choose for Vlissingen. “Vlissingen is located close to the North Sea, and has a lock-free entrance with sufficient draught for receiving large liquid bulk vessels. Also, the connections to the hinterland are excellent, not in the least because of North Sea Port’s plans to realise a pipeline connection to the proposed national hydrogen backbone of Gasunie. The port is also close to Antwerp and Ghent, which means we can offer bunker facilities for vessels travelling to and from that port. This will of course also be possible for all vessels visiting North Sea Port. Another reason why we have decided to opt for Vlissingen is the fact that the Port Authority is very collaborative and is really doing its utmost to help us realise the terminal.” Mr Smyth adds, “Starting a new terminal in Rotterdam or Antwerp which both already have large storage facilities for oil & gas products can be a challenge for a newcomer like us. Vlissingen does not really have the same extent of oil & gas related legacy and on top of this, North Sea Port is really focusing on becoming a sustainable port of the future, meaning our plans fit well with theirs.”

Pilot

When looking at sustainability, Evolution Terminal’s plans reach much further than just storing green fuels. “Within our plans for

Main infrastructure

- 150,000m³ ammonia storage – 3 x 50,000m³ refrigerated tanks (-33°C)
- 180,000m³ methanol storage – 8 x 22,500m³ dome roof tanks with IFR
- 3.5ha expansion area – up to 300,000m³ of storage capacity
- Jetties
- 1 x seagoing berth 80,000DWT
- 1 x seagoing/inland barge berth 20,000DWT
- 2 x inland barge berth
- Truck loading facilities
- Rail loading facilities
- Utilities
- Sewage & water treatment
- VOC treatment & ammonia flare
- Electrical power provision
- Firefighting
- Offices & workshops

Main activities

- Ammonia import – 1t million throughput/year
- Methanol import – 1.5t million throughput/year
- Products to be determined – 2-3t million throughput/year (in expansion area)
- Ship discharge & loading
- Barge loading
- Rail loading
- Truck loading

a new terminal at North Sea Port, we are catering to the future. Many companies are divesting their fossil-related operations and assets, and we want to provide them with an alternative for investment and participation”, Mr Smyth elaborates. “For this it is our goal to be as sustainable as possible, not just with regards to the products we store, but also for our future operations. For example, by using sustainable materials in the construction of the terminal where feasible, and by operating as environmentally responsible as possible – such as incorporation of shore-power, and receiving tanker trucks and barges fuelled by hydrogen, and ships running on methanol. Vlissingen will be a pilot project and the lessons learned in this project will help us and our investors to realise sustainable energy hubs at other locations as well.”

The plans for the terminal are currently in an advanced stage of permitting. “We hope to be granted all necessary permits by Q4 this year”, Mr Smyth concludes. “In the meantime we are investigating the market for customers to join us. The process really is a balance between permitting and commercialisation. If we don’t have permits to start constructing the terminal, we cannot guarantee prospective customers the storage facilities they want. However, we are on a great path and we anticipate the start of construction in 2023, and by 2024 we could gradually start up our storage activities and operations.”

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