

Expanding through adding value

Katoen Natie Logipark sets eye on new markets



Photo courtesy of Katoen Natie.

Hidden behind the huge facilities of Dow and Trinseo, not many people are aware of the activities of Katoen Natie Logipark. Until now, as together with sister company Katoen Natie Zeeland Container Terminal it is time for the logistics service provider to step into the spotlight.

Mathias Horckmans and his colleague Hans Durinck talk with PortNews to inform readers about the capabilities of this unseen facility. Having worked for Katoen Natie in various roles since 2013, Mr Horckmans was appointed Managing Director of Katoen Natie Logipark in 2019. Mr Durinck is Managing Director of Katoen Natie's Zeeland Container Terminal since May of this year (see also this year's June issue of PortNews).

Front row

"It is indeed true that not many people are aware of our facility", Mr Horckmans says. "We are located at Valuepark Terneuzen which is situated around the Braakmanhaven basin, on the other side of the extensive Dow terrain. This is not really a high-profile spot. Of course, many know the name Katoen Natie, mainly from our location in the port of Antwerp and North Sea Port's Ghent port area, but I think the market should know more



Being located at the Braakmanhaven, hence not behind the Terneuzen locks, and surrounded by a dense multimodal network, Katoen Natie's Logipark (in front), and ZCT (in the background) are in a position to service the market for a broad range of commodities.



Photo courtesy of Scherpl Fotografie.

Hans Durinck, Managing Director of Katoen Natie Zeeland Container Terminal.



Photo courtesy of Katoen Natie.

Mathias Horckmans, Managing Director of Katoen Natie Logipark.



Photo courtesy of Katoen Natie/Tom D'haenens.

Adding value simply said means that products entering Katoen Natie's terrain will be worth more by the time they leave.

about our facility and the many things we have to offer." Mr Durinck has the same objectives in this matter. "Being located at the Braakmanhaven, hence not behind the Terneuzen locks, and surrounded by a dense multimodal network, we are in a position to service the market for a broad range of commodities", he says. "In this region, a lot is happening with expected growth in cargo flows. This offers ample opportunities for us, as with our strategic location and first-class facilities we are on the front row for these developments."

Way station

Katoen Natie Logipark was founded in 2005, some five years after its Zeeland Container Terminal became operational. Mr Horckmans explains, "In 2005, our terminal started as a logistics service provider exclusively for Dow Benelux, which is only a few hundred meters away from our terminal. In our silos and warehouses, we stored dry bulk products for them that we first transport from their plant to our location. This way, we acted as a way station between Dow and its customers. A few years ago, Trinseo took over part of the facilities of Dow and became a customer for us as well. By now, around 80% of the products we store and handle are from Trinseo, and 20% from Dow." Throughout the years, Logipark has expanded its facilities to the current number of 160 silos that can each store 180t of dry bulk, and 30,000m² for warehousing and handling.

Perfect alternative

"The silos act as temporary storage for various types of plastic granulates. On Trinseo's or Dow's request, certain volumes of the products are taken out from the silos to be (re)packed. For this task we offer facilities to pack in a broad range of packages from 25kg to 1,000kg. Of course, large volumes can also be



Katoen Natie still has room available and when necessary, next to its terrain lies an option for further expansion.

Photo courtesy of Katoen Natie/Tom D'haenens.

arranged for transport in bulk”, Mr Horckmans states. As owner of the goods, Trinseo and Dow choose, on behalf of their customers, the type of packaging and the means of transport. “A large part of the goods is loaded into containers, and a considerable amount of those containers are shipped through the ZCT Westerschelde Terminal,” Mr Durinck elaborates, “and although we speak of large volumes, we still have capacity available for other customers as well. The large container ports such as Antwerp and Rotterdam are currently dealing with congestion and delays, and the larger container operators use the entire capacity over there, leaving little room for other operators. Needless to say, we are open to discuss with these operators how to become a perfect alternative for their barge and shortsea shipments.”

Long-term relations

According to Mr Horckmans, Logipark also has ambitions to increase the services for the company's existing customers Trinseo and Dow, as well as for other companies. “For this, we are not aiming at dry bulk plastics only. With our extensive knowledge of and experience in handling, storing, and packing goods, we can handle everything. We still have room available and when necessary, next to our terrain lies an option for further expansion.” “Katoen Natie is a family company that is always looking for opportunities to add value,” Mr Durinck says, “which means that, for example, in the case of a probable expansion, we look for long-term strategic partners. Long-term partners

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benefit from our in-house knowledge, for instance through our business units Supply Chain Engineering or Process Engineering, to outsource their complex processes to us. All our installations and warehouses are owned by us, making us completely independent from others. For customers that are looking for certainty, this is an important advantage, and for them it is good to know that Katoen Natie is always interested in jointly investing with customers in promising opportunities.” Mr Horckmans names synergy as another important advantage of Katoen Natie. “Being part of a group of vertically integrated business units means that we all can make use of each other's expertise and facilities, which is a reassuring thought for our customers as well. We have everything in-house to be a ‘one-stop-shop’ for our clients.”

Worth more

At Katoen Natie Logipark, storing and handling goods is not just a matter of moving around commodities. According to Mr Horckmans, one of Katoen Natie's core values is Adding Value. “For us,” he says, “adding value simply said means that

products entering our terrain will be worth more by the time they leave. This means that next to storage, we (re)pack and (re)label goods. In the case of our customer Dow for example, we dry and de-dust their products before packing. Alongside this, we take care of the entire logistical process.

We, among other things, check all in and outgoing shipments, and we arrange custom-related formalities for our customers. The only thing Dow and Trinseo have to do is tell us what product needs to be shipped in what kind of package, and at what volume. They also need to arrange the means of transport. However, when necessary, in the Katoen Natie Group we have a business unit Transport, so even this would be no problem for us. For future customers it is also good to know that we have been granted the AEO status. This status is a EU-certified standard authorisation issued by Customs. It certifies that we have met certain standards in relation to, among others, safety and security, systems to manage commercial records, and compliance with customs rules. We are also an ISO-certified company."

Critical eye

"We want to be more than just one of the many logistic companies", Mr Horckmans says. "We value a long relationship with our customers and want to think along with them. The de-dusting and drying of products, for example, were issues that Dow discussed with us. Before packing, they would like to have the products handled that way. For this purpose, we were able to come up with a solution within just a few months. Another example is the most recent change in Logipark, where we rearranged our complete flow to provide space to Trinseo's compounding business. In 2018, Trinseo constructed a state-of-the-art compounding plant inside of Katoen Natie's warehouses. For this purpose, we have also dedicated 40 of our silos to store the compounded goods."



Photo courtesy of Katoen Natie/Tom D'haenens.

A large part of the goods is loaded into containers, and a considerable amount of those containers are shipped through the Zeeland Container Terminal.

Being open to new types of cargo does not mean that Katoen Natie Logipark has no critical eye on commercial opportunities. Nothing is less true, according to Mr Horckmans. "Of course, we have a wide view with our ambitions to expand our market. This does not mean that we will not look critically at opportunities that come our way, as we know exactly what we are capable of, and what not. What we are convinced of is that, in collaboration with our customers, we are able to offer them a tailor-made, value-adding solution for any type of good they entrust to us."

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Photo courtesy of Katoen Natie/Tom D'haenens.