

Standardised port terms on trial at Rotterdam

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Europe's largest port has become a test bed for an initiative it hopes will help global port digitalisation



CASTELEIN: CUSTOMERS WILL DEMAND THAT THE FUNCTIONAL DEFINITIONS ARE PUT INTO EFFECT.

EUROPE'S largest port is leading a new ongoing campaign to standardise port linguistics across the globe, a position it hopes will catapult it to the forefront of digitalisation and improved customer service.

Rotterdam's role in the cross-industry effort to introduce a [uniform set of functional definitions](#) in ports across the globe made it the natural location to kick off the initiative; the port is acting as the test bed for their real time implementation. This trial period is set to last until mid-2018.

Port of Rotterdam chief executive and president Allard Castelein explained that this latest endeavour is intended to further position Rotterdam as a smart port and help shipping lines and terminals.

“Embarking on these kind of initiatives underpins what we stand for, how we position ourselves and how we wish to provide value for our stakeholders and customers,” he said.

Trials of the standardised definitions in Houston and Singapore will follow. This will be followed by a global rollout.

Mr Castelein said the initiative's success will ultimately come from the customers themselves. Customers will demand that the functional definitions are put into effect, which will incentivise any hesitant ports to go in the same direction. Lagging ports could price themselves out of the market, he warned.

“In this era of digitalisation, there will be continuous development of products and services. So we never consider this to be an end state. We will continue to work with our customers to improve the offering and inevitably we will run into some barriers, concerns and critical success factors,” Mr Castelein said.

Rotterdam, the world's 11th largest container port last year, is not known for shying away from innovative ventures. It recently announced it is partnering the eponymous city to set up a field lab to foster the [development of blockchain technologies](#) and also [joined an alliance](#) for low carbon shipping.