

Shell Moerdijk celebrates 40 years of petrochemical production

The petrochemical complex in Moerdijk has nearly tripled its capacity over the years to 5.4 million t/y in 2013 and remains a key asset to Shell globally.

The Moerdijk site is centrally located between the major ports of Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Antwerp in Belgium, and strategically positioned alongside deep water. Over the last 40 years the complex has been expanded over time. Today, its capacity has nearly tripled to 5.4 million t/y, and the site remains one of **Shell's** core global petrochemical manufacturing facilities. It is one of the largest petrochemical facilities in Europe and is closely integrated with Shell Pernis, which is home to Europe's largest refinery. Both sites supply each other with feedstocks – naphtha, hydrowax, gas oil, and liquefied petroleum gas – via an extensive network of pipelines. About 50 % of the goods produced at Shell Moerdijk are transported by pipeline (largely to and from Pernis), 45 % by ship and the remaining 5 % by rail and road (in tankers).

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Construction at Shell Moerdijk began in 1969. The petrochemical complex started up and shipped its first commercial product in 1973. Since then, Shell has continued to grow the facilities, investing significantly over the years to build several new plants and supporting amenities. The second phase of expansion took place in 1976, and a third in 1996. In 1999, Shell's 50:50 joint venture with **BASF – ELLBA BV** – also opened on the site, producing styrene monomer and propylene oxide.

Four decades on, the mega-site manufactures a variety of basic 'building block' petrochemical products (base chemicals such as ethylene, propylene and butadiene) and derivatives (intermediate chemicals such as ethylene oxide, ethylene glycols, styrene monomer, and propylene oxide). Much of these are sold to industrial customers in Europe and beyond, who use them to manufacture many everyday products, including car components, synthetic fibres, insulation materials, latex paints and anti-freeze.

Graham van't Hoff, Executive Vice President for Shell Chemicals, said, "After 40 years, Shell Moerdijk remains a high-performing site that continues to deliver value to Shell. Its tight integration with Shell's Pernis refinery has brought many advantages, including access to competitive feedstocks and efficiencies in infrastructure, operations, logistics and shared manufacturing expertise. Shell expects to continue investing in this key petrochemical asset."

The plants at Shell Moerdijk, all of which are ISO 9001-2000 and/or 14001 certified, cover 250 ha of land, employ about 800 permanent staff and 500 contractors for maintenance and projects. The site still has an additional 70 ha of land – equivalent to over 100 football fields – to accommodate potential growth.

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<http://www.gupta-verlag.com/general/news/industry/14192/shell-moerdijk-celebrates-40-years-of-petrochemical-production>