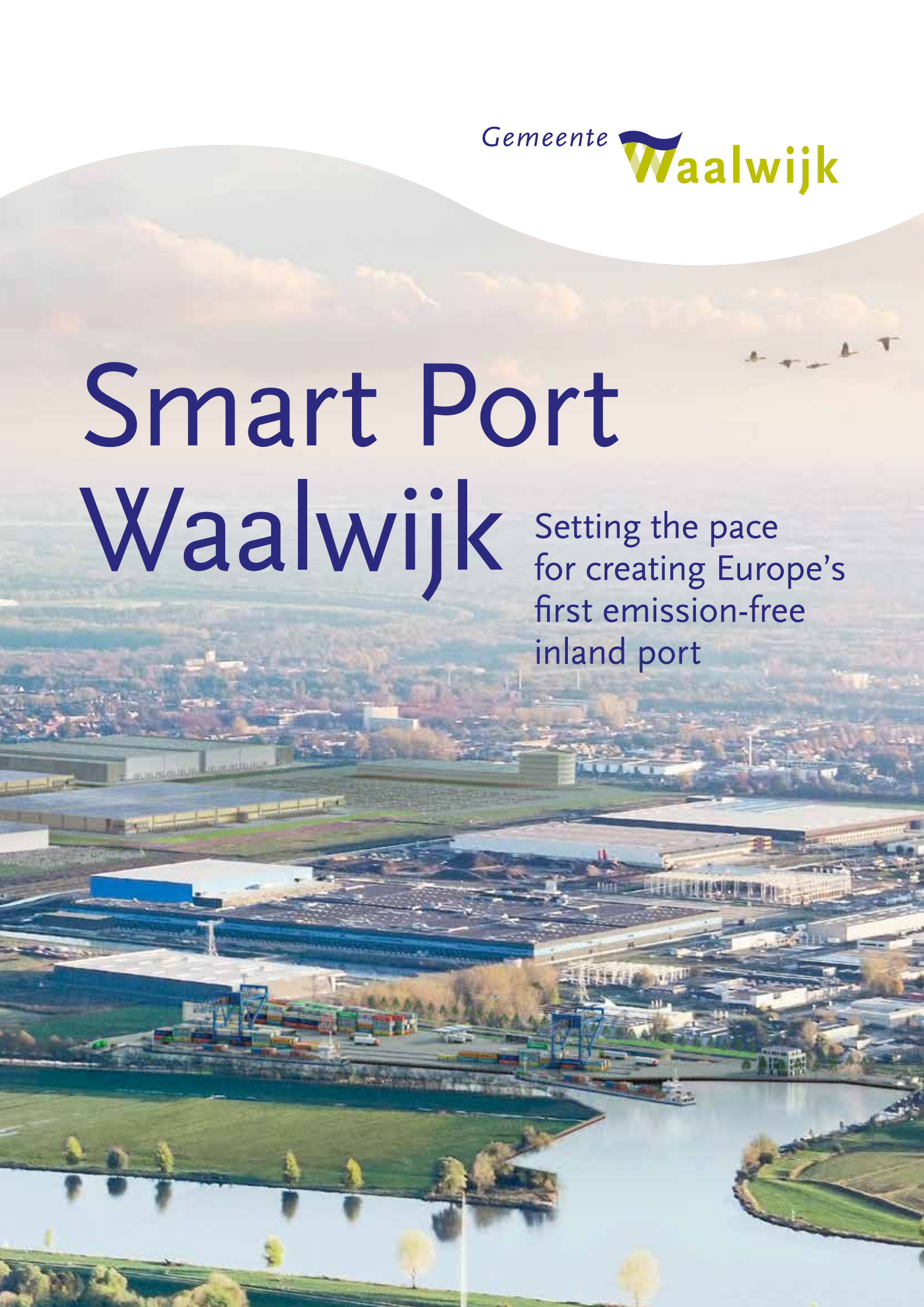


# Smart Port Waalwijk

Setting the pace  
for creating Europe's  
first emission-free  
inland port



As a leading hub for e-commerce warehousing and the Netherlands' top logistics hotspot, Waalwijk is developing a new inland port and barge terminal. With direct access to the Meuse river, the port will accommodate much larger container vessels, each holding up to 210 truckloads. Waalwijk is committed to sustainable shipping and goods handling. Waalwijk aims to become Europe's first fully electric and completely emission-free inland port.



### Top logistics hotspot in the Netherlands

Over the past six years, the neighbouring cities of Waalwijk and Tilburg have been named the Netherlands' number one Logistics Hotspot five times. The Netherlands itself accounts for half of Europe's top 10 logistics hotspots. Situated in North Brabant, an innovation powerhouse within the EU, Waalwijk benefits from a strategic location, a highly skilled workforce, and excellent road and waterway access. These assets have made the region particularly attractive for large-scale e-commerce warehousing.

### Attractive for large warehousing and e-commerce

The economic impact of the region's logistics sector is enormous. With a warehousing capacity of approximately 3 million square metres, the industry has an added value of €2.4 billion and accounts for 15% of all jobs. The region has a large array of logistics related business, from shipping, terminals and wholesale, to e-commerce, retail and IT. Many large international companies such as Fuji, H&M, Decathlon, Syncreon, CEVA Logistics, DB Schenker, Rhenus, International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), Spar, CoolBlue, bol and Magna Tyres have chosen the region to service the West-European market.

### Strategically positioned to serve millions

Major corporations like bol.com – often referred to as the Dutch Amazon - and some of the country's biggest retailers in shoes, lease cars, kitchens, carpets and tyres have chosen Waalwijk for its perfect inland port location to serve its clientele of millions. The city is strategically positioned along the Meuse river, near Europe's largest seaports in Rotterdam and Antwerp, and at the centre of three of Europe's most densely populated regions: the Randstad (8.4 million), the Rhine-Ruhr Area (11.3 million), and the Flemish Diamond (5 million).

### A long history of trade and entrepreneurship

Waalwijk has a rich history in trade, dating back to medieval times when it was known for its horse and cattle markets. Over time, this led to shoe and leather manufacturing in the city. However, globalisation and digitalisation shifted its role in the manufacturing value chain, transforming Waalwijk into a major transport and distribution hub. This rapid growth has brought challenges related to traffic, infrastructure, and environmental impact. For instance, Waalwijk is the third-largest urban area in the Netherlands without a railway connection.

## A city of entrepreneurs and pioneers

With approximately 50,000 residents, Waalwijk is a medium-sized Dutch city but boasts an unusually high employment rate, with over 35,000 jobs. The city is renowned for its strong work ethic, entrepreneurial spirit, and innovative mindset. Waalwijk's football club, RKC Waalwijk, has been competing in the Netherlands' top divisions since the 1980s. This is a testament to the community's resilience and engagement.

## The challenge of increased traffic

The new inland port, with direct access to the Meuse river, will accommodate Class V barges. These vessels can be up to 135 meters long and carry up to 120 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) containers. This expansion will significantly enhance the region's logistics capacity, further strengthening Waalwijk's attractiveness as a logistics hub. However, as the port and its business park expand to 600 hectares (1,500 acres) in the coming years, increasing traffic on local roads and highways presents a challenge. Especially considering that 80% of trucks unload within a 5 kilometre radius.

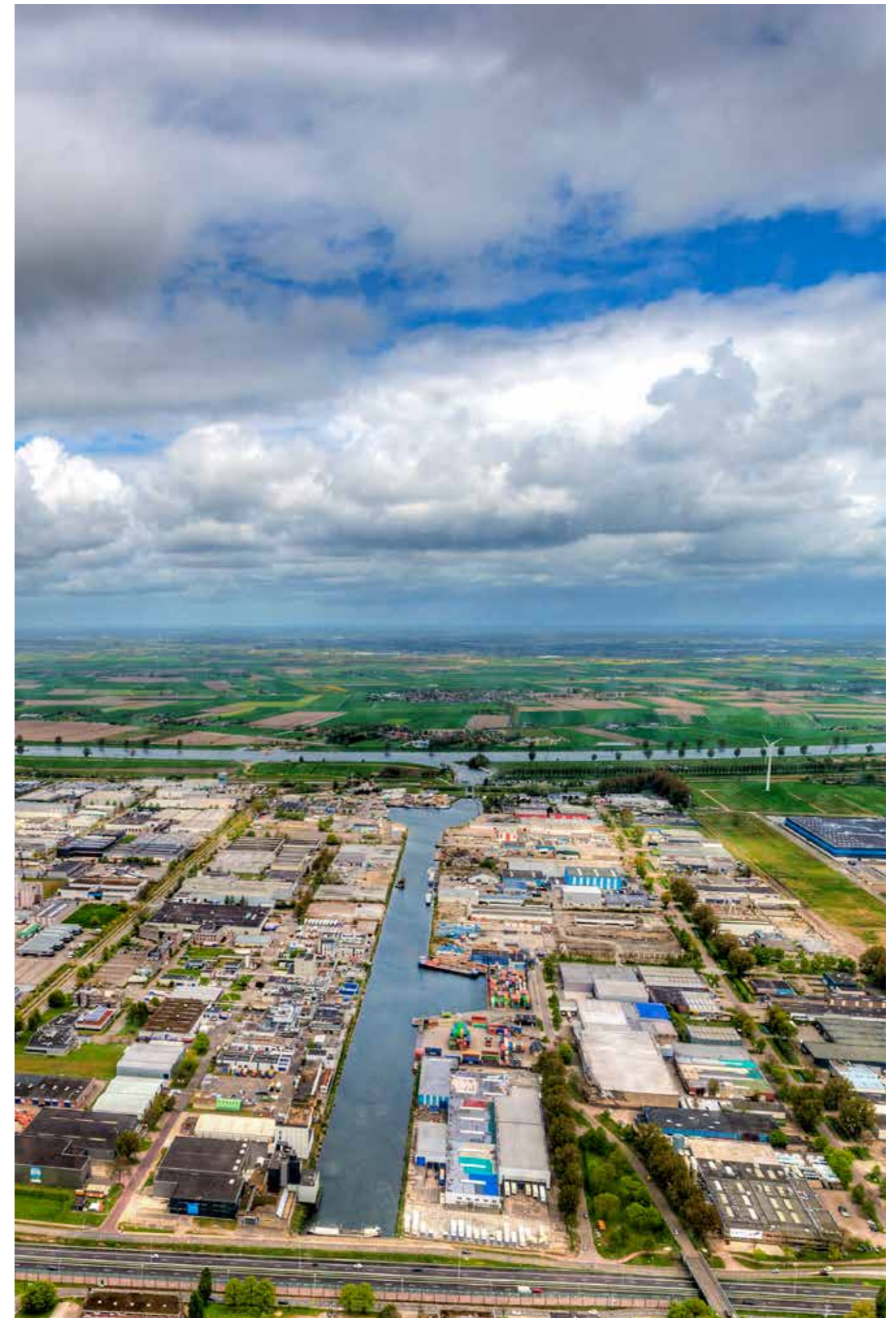
## Cutting carbon emissions by 1,700 tons annually

The anticipated rise in heavy traffic and emissions from both shipping and trucking raises concerns about traffic congestion and air quality. To align with Waalwijk's climate goals, the new inland port is designed to be as sustainable as possible, aiming to be the first climate-neutral and emission-free port in Europe. Once operational, it is expected to eliminate 1,700 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually and reduce fossil-fuelled truck traffic by an impressive 23 million kilometres per year.

## Recognition and support

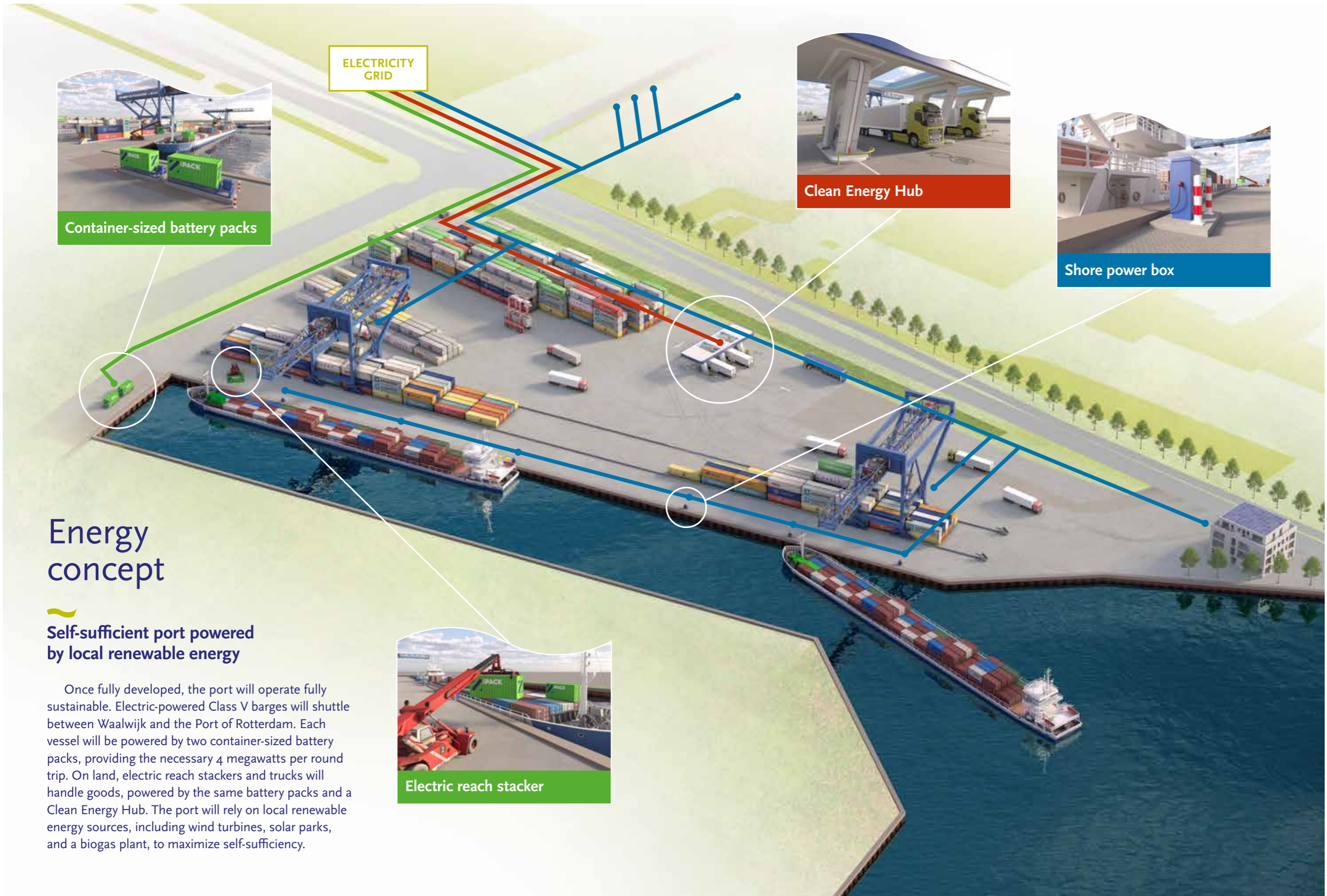
The Smart Port Waalwijk concept has gained significant recognition and support. It has been visited by various Members of the European Parliament, Dutch Ministers, and regional policymakers. Public-private partnerships have secured substantial funding for the port's construction and electrification:

- €5 million from the Ministry of Infrastructure
- €7.5 million from the Province of North Brabant
- €6 million (public and private) from the Ministry of the Interior for the Smart Port Waalwijk concept
- €60,000 from the European City Facility (EUCF) for the initial investment concept
- €355,000 from the Interreg North Sea project Green Supply Chains for developing a technical roadmap toward an emission-free port



~  
The sustainable port  
will help Waalwijk to  
become completely  
carbon neutral by 2043





# Energy concept

## Self-sufficient port powered by local renewable energy

Once fully developed, the port will operate fully sustainable. Electric-powered Class V barges will shuttle between Waalwijk and the Port of Rotterdam. Each vessel will be powered by two container-sized battery packs, providing the necessary 4 megawatts per round trip. On land, electric reach stackers and trucks will handle goods, powered by the same battery packs and a Clean Energy Hub. The port will rely on local renewable energy sources, including wind turbines, solar parks, and a biogas plant, to maximize self-sufficiency.

## Strategic objectives

65 percent

occupancy rate by 2028

1,700 tons

of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction per year

600,000 tons

or 120,000 TEU throughput by 2028 (2.5 times current capacity)

23 million

fewer truck kilometres per year (impacting the A15, A16 and A59 highways)

## Challenges

1.

Grid congestion for next 10 years

2.

Electric shipping in its pioneering phase

3.

Wind energy remains a politically sensitive subject

4.

Legal objections delaying port construction

## Partners



GREEN SUPPLY CHAINS

Interreg North Sea



Co-funded by the European Union



The Smart Port Waalwijk project represents a bold step toward sustainable logistics, reinforcing Waalwijk's role as an innovative and forward-thinking logistics hub. With strong governmental and private sector support, the region is set to become a global leader in emission-free inland shipping.

For more information or contact information go to [www.waalwijk.nl/smartport](http://www.waalwijk.nl/smartport)

Graphic design Marieke van de Graft Artist impressions Pim Rongen / Joost Schrover

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