

## **PORT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

### **NETWORKED SOLUTIONS**

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#### **Setting the standard**

In terms of environmental management, over the last ten years, the port sector has raised its profile substantially and demonstrated competence to deliver both environmental protection and sustainable development in many areas of its operations. A wide ranging series of port-led initiatives related to policy issues, practical implementation of best practice, the raising of awareness, and demonstrable quality assurance have delivered effective management options and a change of course on environmental issues from reactive to proactive.

The sector's policy of voluntary, self regulation to high standards of environmental stewardship has been implemented through a network of port authorities working within an overall framework based on the free exchange of environmental knowledge and experience backed by the development of cost-effective and practicable management tools and methodologies. This novel approach has its origins in the port-inspired Eco-Information and ECOPORTS R&D projects that were partly funded by the EC. The sector can point to an established and successful partnership between the European Sea Ports Organization (ESPO), professional port managers, university researchers and specialist advisors that has produced tangible products and outcomes (see, for example, [www.ecoports.com](http://www.ecoports.com)).

Port authorities are well aware of the need to *demonstrate* their environmental credentials to an ever widening list of stakeholders who are themselves increasingly sensitive to risk and the consequences of impacts and incidents. The sector's 'Eco' approach recognizes that environmental issues themselves need not be a matter of direct competition between them and that a level playing field for the implementation of legislation and regulation is desirable for all ports. With these factors in mind, a new Foundation has been formed to deliver sector-wide environmental support services for port environmental managers ([foundation@ecoports.com](mailto:foundation@ecoports.com)).

#### **Delivering support**

The EcoPorts Foundation (EPF) has recently been established as a non-profit making organization to provide a networked platform for access to the products and services resulting from the sector's R&D activities and to provide a focal point and forum for on-going and future environmental initiatives. The Foundation is recognized by ESPO as the point of collaboration for

environmental research and development projects designed to assist in the implementation of port policy. The Foundation is also the coordinating agency for delivering support services related to a wide range of environmental management including standards, performance, monitoring and training.

Membership is open to all European ports and working relationships are also being established world-wide. Its current Board consists of representatives from the ports of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Barcelona, Genoa, Gdansk, Goteborg, Hamburg, Rotterdam and the British Ports Association.

### **Practical products**

Throughout the collaborative R&D activities, port professional managers stressed the need for the development of practicable, cost-effective tools and methodologies to assist the ports in dealing with their environmental liabilities and responsibilities. The networked approach that combined the knowledge and experience of many port partners avoided duplication of effort, concentrated on a harmonized response and produced a flexible framework capable of addressing the wide range and scope of environmental issues. Specific management options include:

- Self Diagnosis Methodology (SDM): a user-friendly, check list of a port's current environmental management capability that can serve as a baseline of current performance, can be used to identify objectives and targets for improvement, and gives a measure of the status of the port's procedures compared with recognized environmental management systems (EMS).
- Port Environmental Review System (PERS): a new standard of performance designed specifically for port authorities that wish to develop an EMS at their own speed. Ports may choose to have their procedures reviewed independently and a Certificate of Validation can be issued by Lloyd's Register on behalf of the Foundation to successful ports.
- Other, useful products include;
  - A methodology to identify significant environmental aspects
  - A Decision Support System for dealing with environmental issues
  - Database of best practice solutions and Handbook of Environmental Performance Indicators
  - Guidelines for the development of EMS for ports and port areas
  - Dedicated training packages that can be delivered to groups or individual ports in any country.

### **Current and future activities**

The EcoPorts Foundation (EPF) has been configured around a professional secretariat to provide a 'one-stop' point of contact for port environmental managers who wish to obtain information on practical options related to sustainable development, risk reduction and continuous improvement of environmental quality. EPF is currently consolidating its representation from the port sector ranging from strategists to operations managers.

Research and development projects currently being pursued include issues related to noise, use of remote sensing systems in support of environmental management, renewable energy, risk management, ports and education, dredging and sustainability in the logistic chain.

The EPF has been recognised by the EU as the delivery platform for the tools, methodologies and networked experience produced by the ECOPORTS project. This mechanism will ensure that the products and services developed and validated during the R&D phase will be available for the foreseeable future for the port professionals. This is particularly important for all the ports who have been awarded the Certificate of validation related to PERS – the new standard for port environmental management.

The next 12 months will see a programme of trainings on EcoPorts tools, environmental issue-related workshops, seminars on the logistic chain, launch of new projects and continuing R&D on selected, priority issues. Latest developments can be seen in [www.ecoports.com](http://www.ecoports.com).

### **Impact of the network**

Since leading the way on these initiatives, the port sector has raised environmental awareness and implemented best practice procedures in several key areas of environmental management in ports throughout Europe. Ten years of collaborative effort has raised the sector's benchmark of performance on critical issues such as the formulation of environmental policy, implementation of plans, monitoring of impact, and the involvement of stakeholders.

Membership of the Foundation is open to all sea and inland port authorities plus those operators involved in the Logistic Chain. Application details can be obtained from [foundation@ecoports.com](mailto:foundation@ecoports.com)