

Support for consolidation of maritime rail containers in the Flemish ports

Disclaimer: this document is only meant as a clarification. It does not pretend to be complete nor fully accurate. For the correct rules and procedures, please check the Government of Flanders order.

Aim of the support scheme

- To support the bundling and distribution of maritime rail containers in the Flemish ports;
- To promote a modal shift towards intermodal rail transport.

More specifically, the support scheme wants to lower the cost of the bundling of containers from different maritime terminals by rail. In that way it supports the introduction of new intermodal rail services to the hinterland of the Flemish ports. In any case, the support is a temporary measure to bridge the period until there are enough volumes to justify direct trains.

How does it work?

The support scheme consists of two interrelated support systems:

1. Support for the functioning and costs associated with the hub from where the maritime containers are distributed to the maritime terminals or consolidated.
2. Support for the shuttle trains between the hub and the maritime terminals.

Support for the hub

- Every train that passes through a hub where containers destined for or originating from different maritime terminals are consolidated or distributed, can receive up to 500€ for each passage (in/out) as a compensation for the costs associated with the functioning of the hub.;
- Hub activities eligible for support can consist of the physical transfer of containers between trains, the (un-)coupling of the wagons or (un-)loading part of the containers in one maritime terminal before moving to another maritime terminal where the rest is (un-)loaded. However, the hub should be situated in one of the Flemish ports.
- The maximum duration of the support for a hinterland service using a hub is 1 year. After this period, the operator should be able to introduce direct trains between the hinterland and one or several terminals.
- New hinterland services, as well the increase of the frequency of existing services, are eligible for support.
- A limitation is that at least 20% of the hinterland train (in number of wagons) consists of containers and that at least 20% of these containers (ITE's) are shifted in the hub for another maritime terminal. These figures are calculated on a quarterly basis. Also, only international hinterland services are eligible for support for the functioning of the hub.

Support for the shuttle trains

- Every shuttle train between the hub and a maritime terminal located in one of the Flemish ports, can receive up to 500€ for each run (to/from) as a compensation of the cost associated with operating the shuttle.
- The maximum duration of the support for a shuttle service is 2 years.
- Pre-existing, new as well as the increase of frequency of existing shuttle services are eligible for support.
- A limitation is that at least 20% of the containers (ITE's) using the shuttle service are shifted in the hub to/from a hinterland train. These figures are calculated on a quarterly basis.

Summary

Movement	Per train	Subsidy period
Shuttle hub - terminal		
Existing	500 €	2 y
Frequency increase	500 €	2 y
New	500 €	2 y
Hinterland connection		
Existing	NA	
Frequency increase	500 €	1 y
New	500 €	1 y

Procedures

- Every operator running an international intermodal rail service and using a hub in one of the Flemish ports as well as operators running rail shuttle services between this hub and one or more maritime terminals in one of the Flemish ports can request support by simple notification of the concerned port authorities and the Flemish government.
- Reporting and subsequent payments are made on a quarterly basis.
- Payments are split up on a 50/50 basis between the concerned port authorities and the Flemish government. Payments are also made as long as there is enough budget available.
- Controlling of the reported information and final decision on the payment are done by the concerned port authorities and Flemish government.
- In normal circumstances, only a minimum of information is requested from the operator, allowing for a correct assessment of the payments. However, as imposed by the European Commission who has approved the support scheme, a more in-depth audit can be requested by the Port Authorities and Flemish government.