

Environmentally friendly logistics

At the 2017 edition of the internationally renowned MIPIM Real Estate event in the French City of Cannes, there was no shortage of Belgian projects that made it into spotlight. One of these was the 'NIKE European Logistics Campus' in Laakdal, which won the MIPIM Award in the category 'Best Industrial & Logistics Development'.

The 'NIKE European Logistics Campus' numbers five distribution centres, the latest one of which officially opened its doors at the end of May 2016. It is one of the multinational's 58 distribution centres across the globe, which all together process 1 billion products a year (footwear, sportswear and equipment). The decision to go with the Belgian Laakdal was among others inspired by its central location. Within a 500 km radius, the distribution centre caters for no less than 60 % of the European spending power. During 2016, a staggering 300 million NIKE products left Laakdal for 38 European and Asian markets. 3000 people are employed here.

Ambitious sustainability goals

Sustainable innovation, whether in matters of product development or the construction of its distribution centres, has always been central to the NIKE ethos. Bert Moris, Facility Manager Nike European Logistics Campus (ELC): "Our objective is to double our turnover and halve our carbon footprint by 2025! These ambitious sustainability targets go far beyond limiting our CO₂ emissions". Circular economy is a goal, a 'closed-loop' manufacturing process that uses fewer raw materials to produce products with a longer useful life.



No less than 99 % of the freight traffic into NIKE European Logistics Campus in Laakdal arrives via the adjoining Albertkanaal.



The site run on 100 % renewable energy and is self-sufficient in terms of its own energy requirements. That has been achieved by combining five different sources: wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal power, hydroelectricity and biomass.

“On the other hand, the ELC in Laakdal will allow us to achieve our mission of bringing the entire NIKE product range to consumers faster than ever, no matter where they are based, whether they’re looking for a single pair of sports shoes or a consignment of 10,000”.

No less than 99 % of the freight traffic into the ELC in Laakdal arrives via the adjoining Albertkanaal, which reduces the number of truck transports by 14,000 a year. Electric trucks to move trailers to the loading/unloading quays are currently being tested.

More than 95 % of all waste is recycled on site. Shoe soles, for instance, are given a second lease of life as a soft surface for playgrounds. All the paths our staff use have been covered with this type of surface. We even have a flock of sheep grazing the NIKE site and much has been done in the way of biodiversity.

In the space of one year, more than 1000 new people were hired. Staff with a daily commute of 15 km or more are entitled to an electric bike.

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On-site energy

The construction of the ELC in Laakdal started in 2013 with the assembly of the warehouse racks. The actual building itself was constructed as a shell around them. It took one and a half times the amount of steel it took to build the Eiffel Tower! Yet, this method, where the warehouse racks also form the supporting structure, allowed us to dispense with the need to build concrete columns and beams, which meant a tremendous saving on materials and generated far less waste.

The entire site is run on 100 % renewable energy and is self-sufficient in terms of its own energy requirements. That has been achieved by combining five different sources: wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal power, hydroelectricity and biomass. The wind turbines have a capacity that could supply 5,000 families with power, our solar park is the size of three soccer pitches.



The design by Jaspers-Eyers Architects makes maximum use of the incoming daylight. Bert Moris explains : *“Aside from the windows, we opted for a unique system of ‘light catchers’ on the roofs, which diffuse the natural light inside the buildings via a labyrinth of glass fibres. In addition, we opted for 100 % LED lighting,*

The design of the building makes maximum use of the incoming daylight.

controlled by means of dimmers and presence sensors, to reduce energy consumption to a minimum and ensure an efficient operating environment.”

The cranes that put the pallets in the racks and take them out again are the fastest ones on the market and are fitted with a recovery system that converts braking power into electric power.

Right from the design stage, the need to encourage biodiversity was taken into account. Sheep tend to the grass around the buildings in a natural manner. Beehives around the site will also enhance biodiversity on and well beyond the NIKE site.

This year, NIKE will start building a new sixth logistics building, specifically for the distribution of clothing. Commissioning is scheduled for mid-2019.

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