
BUNKERING ALLIANCE

In April 2013, four organisations involved in bunkering activities in the port of Rotterdam entered into an agreement. The purpose of this agreement was to create even more effective safeguards for the quality and quantity of bunker fuels (fuels for shipping transport) and to realise a more transparent and efficient bunkering process. The agreement was signed by the Port of Rotterdam Authority, Nederlandse Organisatie voor de Energiebranche (NOVE), Vereniging van Nederlandse Petroleum Industrie (VNPI) and Vereniging van Nederlandse Tankopslagbedrijven (VOTOB).

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR:

- **Clarity regarding substances/streams that are not permitted in bunker fuels**

The alliance members have drawn up a list of 'additional' substances that are considered undesirable. This list was presented to the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. The Ministry welcomed the list and has presently forwarded it to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which bears responsibility for the regulatory framework for global shipping. The list is intended as an international guideline for determining which substances are undesirable as bunker fuel components. A number of the alliance members have been asked to contribute to the relevant IMO consultations and will continue to actively monitor progress.

- **Clarity regarding the supplied bunkering volumes**

The Port Authority organised an extensive information meeting about the devices commonly referred to as 'Mass Flow Meters'. This equipment has been installed on a limited scale on board several bunker vessels and is also being tested by various tank storage terminals. The meters have become compulsory in the port of Singapore as of 1 January 2017. The Port Authority recommends further researching the use of Mass Flow Meters in the port of Rotterdam, and perhaps taking the results on board during the possible development of a 'bunker certificate', which certifies that bunker suppliers satisfy various previously established requirements.

- **A transparent bunkering process in Rotterdam, with traceable product streams**

In addition, it was examined whether taking an additional fuel sample contributes to transparency within the bunkering chain. The sample in question is known as a 'continuous drip' sample, which would be taken during the restocking of the bunker vessel prior to its delivery of bunker fuel to the see-going vessel. Two pilot projects were organised in Rotterdam's port area to field-test this concept. In practice, taking a 'continuous drip' sample proved to involve a number of issues and impossibilities. In addition, parallel research performed by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment showed that the paperwork that accompanies the bunker fuel already provides a clear picture of the origin of the products. The alliance will be incorporating the knowledge gained in this research in further studies into the correct procedure for taking samples on board the bunker lighter after restocking: the 'composite sample procedure'.

- **Efficient execution of the operational bunkering process**

Over the past few years, various improvements have been implemented within operational processes in the port of Rotterdam (under the programme titles 'Schip Centraal' and 'Avanti'). The bunkering process has also benefited from these improvements.

In addition, de-bunkering posed a problem in recent years. In nearly every case, returned bunker fuel (returned in connection with vessel repairs, excess refuelling or supply of the 'wrong' product, etc) was classified as waste by various responsible authorities. This resulted in the unnecessary disposal of the product in waste reception systems, with all the associated costs. Consultation between the different stakeholders has resulted in the formulation of a new procedure, in which fuel of this kind

is not automatically classified as waste in specific cases. Unfortunately, the adoption of this new procedure has not always had a particularly strong impact in practice. The alliance therefore wants to examine this aspect in further detail in the period ahead.

- **Clarity regarding the bunker quality of the bunker fuels supplied in Rotterdam**

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted Marpol Annex VI, which sets legal restrictions for the bunkering sector. In addition to these legal requirements, the parties involved (virtually all fuel oil is supplied by members of the VNPI or NOVE) have agreed that bunker fuel also needs to satisfy the requirements of the ISO-8217 standard (for use in marine diesel engines).

FURTHER COLLABORATION

Based on what has been achieved so far, the alliance partners have agreed to continue their collaboration. The focus will be on further improving transparency and efficiency in the sector. The partners will be closely examining how communication can be used to raise all stakeholders to the same level of information. In addition, they will study whether projects like a licensing system for all bunker fuel suppliers are feasible, and review the possible international implementation of further quality requirements where necessary. The alliance will also study the impact of new air quality and environmental regulations on the bunkering sector. Moreover, the parties involved are delighted to announce that the KVNR (Royal Dutch Shipowners Association) has joined the alliance – meaning that the users of the bunkering services have now also ‘pulled up a chair’ and the entire chain is presently involved in the consultations.

Port of Rotterdam Authority

NOVE

(Nederlandse Organisatie voor de
Energiebranche)

VNPI

(Vereniging van Nederlandse
Petroleum Industrie)

VOTOB

(Vereniging van Nederlandse
Tankopslagbedrijven)

KVNR

(Royal Dutch Shipowners
Association)