Container throughput is the driver behind the Port of Rotterdam’s growth. Inland container shipping can play an important role in the hinterland transport of containers. The handling of inland container shipping vessels at the Rotterdam deep-sea terminals has been under pressure for some years. The solution lies in a more transparent & efficient design of the inland container shipping chain. This demands cooperation between all players in the chain.

Various initiatives have now been taken to reduce the waiting times for inland container shipping vessels at the Rotterdam deep-sea terminals. One of these initiatives is the bundling of cargo in West-Brabant. The cooperation between Oosterhout Container Terminal, Barge Terminal Tilburg, Combined Cargo Terminals and Moerdijk Container Terminals and the deep-sea terminals in the Port of Rotterdam on the “West-Brabant Corridor” is a great example of a concrete initiative that has brought positive results. Bundling cargo on these corridors achieves improved capacity utilisation of inland vessels and reduces waiting times at the terminals.

**Impact of increased scale**

A continuous increase in scale is underway in shipping: both vessels and call sizes are increasing in size. Currently, the largest vessels that arrive at the Port of Rotterdam are larger than 21,000 TEU, compared with 14,000 TEU a few years ago. Partly because of this, the peaks in deep-sea call sizes have increased enormously in recent years. Sea-going vessels also encounter delays increasingly often. Out-of-schedule situations of deep-sea vessels and vessels that arrive simultaneously only serve to intensify the existing peaks. The formation of alliances between shipping companies has resulted in new sailing schedules. This has increased transshipment volumes, which has again increased the number of peaks at the deep-sea terminals. Handling capacity for inland vessels comes under pressure during these peaks.

**Current situation in inland shipping**

The inland terminals sail with their own vessels to the terminals in Rotterdam. This means that the deep-sea terminals receive many vessels with small call sizes. Moreover, the scheduling of calls in the port is complex and there is a risk of delay when sailing to multiple terminals.

**Cooperation on the West-Brabant Corridor**

The West-Brabant Corridor vessels have fixed calls with large call sizes at one deep-sea terminal. Every day a scheduled service visits each terminal without delay.

**Source** — Port of Rotterdam