

# TANK STORAGE

## EU-US COLLABORATION

Is the transatlantic relationship dead? FETSA's Ravi Bhatiani takes a look

## MOVING PRODUCT SAFELY

Woodfield's Gary Reddecliffe shares his top learnings from marine loading projects

## CHEMICAL EXCELLENCE

Hear how Gadot Belgium and Exolum Mannheim are diversifying their terminals and winning business



**WOODFIELD**

# CUSTOMER-FOCUSED

CEO of Gadot Europe, Wim De Windt, speaks to Anamika Talwaria about the Belgium terminal's latest award win

**> SITUATED IN** Ghent's North Sea Port, Gadot's Belgium terminal benefits from an excellent strategic location. The 23-hectare site has direct access to both sea and inland waterways, combining storage with distribution and contract manufacturing activities. 'That includes things like blending, reaction chemistry and filling of liquid chemicals,' explains Wim De Windt, CEO of Gadot Europe.

Proving that scale isn't always the most key factor, the terminal handles around 300 ships a year, 80 trucks a day and has around 200 tanks that store between 100 m<sup>3</sup> and 8,000 m<sup>3</sup>. But Gadot serves a broad customer base that comes to them for their unique combination of storage and production. 'We're basically a one-stop-shop where our customers can reliably store and blend their raw materials and finished products,' explains De Windt. 'They have access to all kinds of added value services, including filling, storage of packed goods, etc. It allows our customers to be comfortable while we take over the complexity of their supply chain. We do their inventory management, their call-offs, and we try to sit together and see what the most optimal solution would be to their challenges.'

Case in point, the current blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is causing fears of a base oils shortage – among other commodities. 'We've been able to partially mitigate that by offering safety stock options to our customers, close to their operations,' says De Windt.

Another type of value-add that Gadot Belgium offers is a kind of chemical match-making service. 'We like to try and create synergies between our customers, or find potential customers related to products we might store,' says De Windt. 'We're able to just pump product over from a tank elsewhere in the terminal that might be of interest to a customer, creating those connections and adding value for our clients.'

## INVESTING IN DIVERSIFICATION

'We've invested quite significantly in both infrastructure and processes – strengthening our role as contract manufacturing partner and increasing



sustainability measures,' says De Windt. 'At the same time, we also grew and developed our distribution activities. We're part of an international group that now allows us to export into Western Africa, which has been a really exciting project to get involved with.'

This is now translating to tangible business successes. 'Executing that diversification strategy has been an important driver in our growth story – especially in the current climate,' says De Windt. 'Being less reliant on one type of product makes us more resilient and helps us avoid bottlenecking.'

## IMPLEMENTING WIND AND BIOMASS STRATEGIES

For Gadot Belgium, an increased focus on sustainability measures has brought direct success, receiving the LogiChem Excellence in Sustainability Award for its Low-Carbon Chemical Supply Chain Initiative. At its terminal infrastructure in Belgium, Gadot has implemented renewable electricity generation through a large on-site wind turbine producing approximately 10 GWh of renewable electricity annually, complemented by the use of sustainable heat generated from non-recyclable wood waste biomass. These measures mitigate more than 6,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions each year. 'Infrastructure plays a critical role in the decarbonisation of chemical supply chains,' says De Windt. 'By integrating renewable energy generation and circular



energy solutions directly into terminal operations, we can significantly reduce emissions while continuing to provide reliable logistics services to our customers.'

The rationale behind the project was fairly simple, but execution was a long-term challenge. 'We wanted to be the most sustainable, highly specialised terminal. Most of the energy we use is heating our tanks and reactors – it's a high requirement as a chemicals and contract manufacturing site,' explains De Windt. 'The idea was to cut our carbon footprint as much as possible by using wind – though it's not always readily available – and steam supplied from a new biomass plant. Compared to our baseline before these projects, we can cover about 70% of our electricity needs with the wind turbines – including

the office! We also inject our excess energy back to the grid, so it's like we're supplying the local area. The biomass-sourced steam comes to our site via pipeline and covers about 80% of our heating needs. This has significantly reduced our carbon footprint by up to 70% CO<sub>2</sub>e compared to 2020 baseline. These sustainability initiatives not only reduce our environmental footprint, but also support our customers in meeting their ESG targets and improving the resilience of their supply chain.' This is also being audited by an external sustainability partner to provide more accountability and credibility.

The win has been confirmation that the efforts on the ground have been seen externally, and is recognition of the work the team has put in. 'These are not short-term projects,' explains De Windt. 'The wind turbine project started in 2022 and was commissioned in 2023. The steam supply from the biomass plant was also initiated in 2022, so this win has been a long-term journey and a very important milestone for the team.'

He continues: 'And it's not just recognition for our team, but also for our collaborators and partners in the port. There was a lot of resistance at the time – we had permitting challenges, multiple negotiations with our partners and even some internal resistance about being the anchor client for the biomass plant seemed risky for our steam supply. But ultimately it was the collaboration across these parties that made the project possible. And it goes to show that progress really requires openness and strong communication.'

On the flip side, the energy suppliers didn't need convincing at all. 'They were really keen because we were going to be their anchor client. They needed us to

## 'We wanted to be the most sustainable but highly specialised terminal.'

get the financing rounds to conclusion – especially for the biomass plant,' says De Windt. 'But we were also dependent on their facilities and services. We faced some challenges where our offtaker clients didn't always fit with the supplier's ideal profile, but we've learned from it and made this success story.'

There are of course still ambitions for other work, too. 'We're looking at battery storage, solar panels – and we're looking for new synergies with new products too,' says De Windt. 'I think we attract customers that are looking to store or to blend more renewable products, because they can see we're a partner who cares about sustainability, and has really put the infrastructure in place to really make a difference. That helps them with the life cycle of their products. So, it's really a win-win.'

Now that the project is over, De Windt has gained some good experience about the importance of constant communication. 'These kinds of things are never finished,' he says. 'We're always looking to improve. It's key that we have alignment on both the objectives and on the execution – not only to get it going but to keep it going.' Now, the challenge is the operational reality of these new energy flows. 'It is really interesting for business continuity,' says De Windt. 'We've had to make sure we come up with contingency and buffer measures, but these new flows can also help buffer us against external insecurities, such as disruption in the oil market.'

## BEING A LONG-TERM PARTNER

'What makes us unique is the combination of activities we offer and flexibility we can provide our customers,' says De Windt. That, and being in a strategic location – like North Sea Port – but without the port congestion of busier ports in the ARA region.

The team's dedication to providing a flexible service can also increase complexity. For example, one of Gadot's customers is keen to bring specialty chemicals out from the Middle East via ISO tanks or flexibags. 'It's not our preference but if it helps our customers continue manufacturing, then we'll find a way,' says De Windt.

And in this instance, Gadot Belgium has managed to find a partner to help facilitate this customer request. 'Every crisis leaves the door open for opportunity, and our clients value speed in this world,' he says. Gadot is now looking into permits for an ISO tank bund. 'We optimise where we can,' says De Windt. 'And we're focused on long-term relationships, not just individual business transactions.'

## CONTINUED SUCCESS

It's not just one link in the chain. 'Our customers benefit from having a sustainable partner in us, contributing to the accountability and lowering of their scope 3 emissions,' says De Windt. 'But these improvements can only create real value if they translate across supply chains – aligning on logistics, energy, operations; optimising logistics through modalities.'

For Gadot Belgium, success means continued growth. 'We want to further expand our infrastructure and the products we can handle and make more success out of joint collaborations. There hasn't been a better time to seize these opportunities,' says De Windt. 'Of course, there's ample, significant scope for new and more sustainable solutions. And the next step will be digitisation.' That includes technologies making systems more integrated, predictive and proactive. 'That's the future,' says De Windt. 'With AI, we've entered an era of extreme acceleration. So we have to become a significant user; potentially even a developer of these technologies.'

**For more information:**  
[www.gadot.com](http://www.gadot.com)



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