Peter van der Steen, managing director of Rhenus Logistics Nederland:

Intris is like an in-house supplier

Intris has been at home with Rhenus Logistics for more than 20 years, at first only in Antwerp but for the last ten years also with the parent company in Rotterdam. Together with the Rhenus customers, Intris examines how existing business processes can be optimised to make the operations smoother and more efficient. But that's not all: Intris takes care of the operational programming and implements the solutions, and also carries out the network operation and monitoring. "It's like having our own in-house supplier," says managing director Peter van der Steen.

The Ports Logistics division of Rhenus Logistics is unique in the port of Rotterdam: it not only covers the entire range of logistics services (ship's agent, forwarder, freight handler, customs clearance agent, barge operator etc.), but also handles a wide range of goods itself: containers, conventional freight, project cargo, dry bulk, offshore (wind turbines, oil platforms etc.).
From its beginnings as the barge operator SRN Alpina Scheepvaartmaatschappij, these developments are nothing less than spectacular. The decades-long collaboration with Intris actually dates back to this period. Alpina was taken over by Rhenus in 2001, and the activities in Rotterdam were developed further from there.

In the meantime Rhenus Port Logistics has grown into a company with more than 100 employees and an annual freight volume of 1.5 million tonnes including 30,000 containers.

The company has a terminal in the Waalhaven section of the port (21,000 m² of covered storage capacity) and another in the Maasvlakte area (70,000 m² covered and 130,000 m² open), and handles steel, forest products and containers at both locations. The Maasvlakte terminal also has a dedicated project cargo zone.

"We aim to be constantly one step ahead of the rest. With Intris we manage it."

Never change a winning team

"In the early days of Rhenus Port Logistics our IT was operated centrally from the office in Antwerp and we also made use of the TRIS Forwarding solution and the integration with accounting. Over the years our activities in Rotterdam expanded enormously, and so ten years ago we decided to manage our own IT.

Another reason for this was that our activities were developing in a different direction from those in Antwerp. Now we use not only the Forwarding solution but also TRIS Customs, TRIS Warehouse and TRIS Container Depot/Repair.

Naturally we as the Dutch office carried out a benchmarking exercise before teaming up with Intris: at first we didn't know what they were worth and what we could ask them to do. But there wasn't any real reason to opt for another supplier, especially as they were able to combine so many types of freight: containers, breakbulk, dry bulk ... you name it.

There aren't many logistics companies that can combine all that, and certainly there are no software companies that can support the whole range. But together with Intris we can do it."

Together with the customer

"The strength of Intris is that their people get round the table with our customers to discuss with them. Sometimes there are customers who want new features, or Rhenus attracts new customers with specific requirements.

In such cases we examine for example how delivering a bulk consignment and then containerising it – or vice versa – can be supported by a single system so that the data only have to be entered once. There are a great many possible variants of such a scenario, but Customs is always the common element. Here too Intris offers added value. With the TRIS Customs Management System we communicate directly with the Customs service, and thanks to this joint consultation the communication complies fully with the requirements of the authorities.

This in turn ensures that there is no noise in the conversation.

Customers are constantly looking for improvements. For example, together with Intris we enable customers to proactively monitor their flow of goods in the way they want: either by opening up part of our platform to them, or by enabling them to automatically consult the status at a particular time every day, or by making the data available in their system. Other customers want to be invoiced automatically from the system, and so we developed this partial solution together with them."

TRIS Container Depot/Repair

For one customer in the Maasvlakte area of the port of Rotterdam the TRIS Container Depot/Repair solution was given a significant upgrade. "Based on the contents of a container and its destination, the system assigns it to a location so we immediately know where each container is to be found.

Outbound we know which ship it has to be loaded onto, and inbound which means of transport has to be used for onward carriage. We record on a tablet whether it is full or empty, how long it has remained on the quay, whether there is any damage, which repairs have been carried out, and so on. We have full transparency over the whole depot, while the customer has full transparency of the status of the containers. This transparency in turn ensures clear reporting and error-free invoicing.

The big strength of Intris is their logistics know-how: they know what a ship looks like, how cargo is loaded and unloaded, what then has to be done with the cargo, what the requirements of the customer are, and so on. In turn they are able to translate all this into supporting IT services.

And of course it is very satisfying to work with them over such a long period: some of our people (including myself) have known their people for 20 years now. That says it all."

"The strength of Intris is the logistics know-how that they have in-house."

A striking example

One of the Rhenus Logistics customers is a worldwide aluminium producer. Some time ago this producer decided to roll out its SAP system to its European sites. Rhenus as the logistics partner and Intris as software supplier to Rhenus were given an important role in the overall logistics chain.

How is this goods flow made up?
The end customer orders goods from the aluminium producer, which ships them to the Rhenus terminal in Rotterdam. At its terminal in the Waalhaven area Rhenus takes care of unloading the ships, the customs formalities, inspection of the goods, storage in the warehouse if required, and further distribution to the final destination.

SAP data flow

1. Sales order

Each time the customer places an order Rhenus receives a sales order sent by EDI from the customer, and a sales order file is created automatically in TRIS Forwarding. This file contains among other things the data on the product, the customer and the final destination.

2. Production and shipment

Once the goods that have been ordered are produced and loaded on board the ship, Rhenus receives a Shipping Notification message by EDI confirming that the goods are on their way to the Rhenus terminal. This message contains all the details of the consignment. A Shipping Notification file is automatically created in TRIS Forwarding for each consignment.

3. Transport planning

The Sales Order information and Shipping Notification information are combined in TRIS Forwarding and on the basis of this an inbound file is created with all the data necessary for getting the goods to the final destination. All the necessary transport is planned, amounting to around 150 transports per week.

4. Reception of the goods on the Rhenus terminal

The goods are unloaded and scanned, and the TRIS system compares the information on the labels with the information received in steps 1 and 2. In this way each aluminium consignment is identified conclusively and entered in the TRIS Warehouse Management System.

Discrepancies between the expected goods and those actually received are automatically recorded and reported to the customer. From the TRIS system Rhenus sends a Goods Acceptance message by EDI to the producer, who updates his own system accordingly.
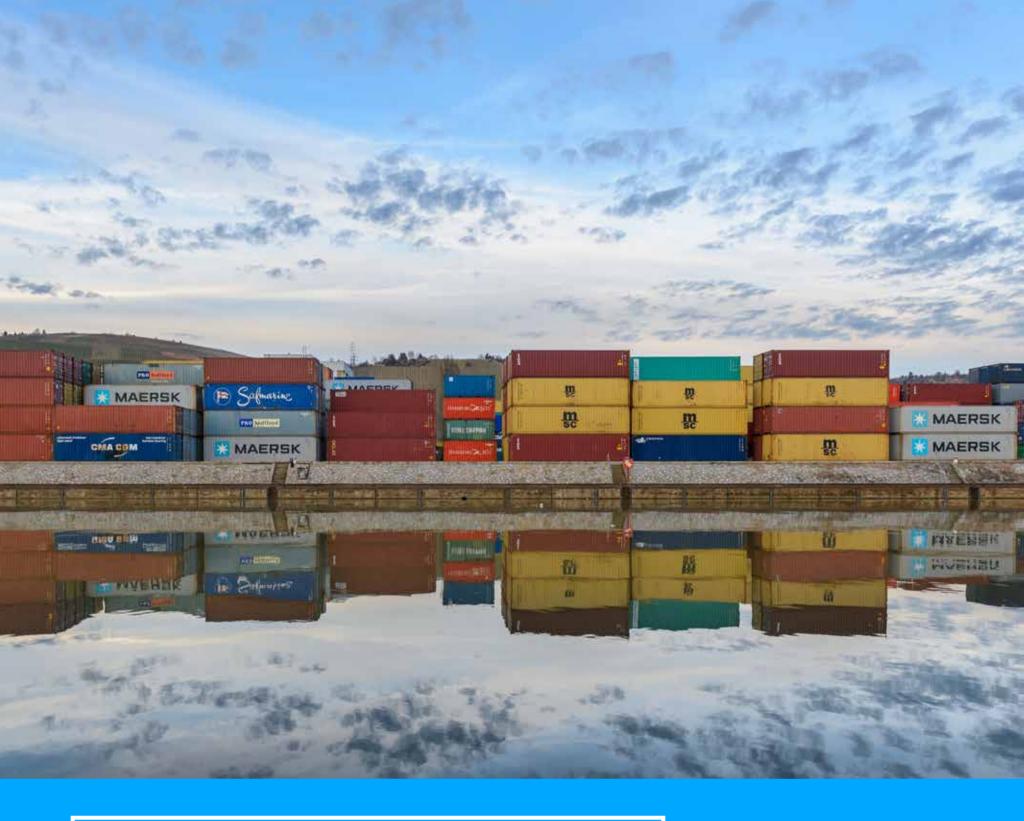At the same time all the necessary customs formalities are carried out by out TRIS Customs.

5. Delivery to the final destination

On the basis of the loading lists generated automatically by TRIS during the transport planning, the goods are loaded into the truck, train or barge on the Rhenus terminal. Each aluminium consignment is scanned once more, so that it is automatically signed out of the TRIS Warehouse Management System and linked to the transport. The TRIS system automatically generates a loading list and a CMR waybill. A Shipping Notification is also sent automatically by EDI to the producer, who then knows that delivery has commenced.

6. Delivery confirmation

On delivery to the final destination by Rhenus a Delivery Confirmation message is sent automatically by EDI to the producer, confirming that the goods have reached the end customer.

Put logic in your logistics

A logistics chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and so it is essential for the underlying software to also be 100% reliable. Intris gives you that guarantee: we are the only software supplier to have AEO certification for direct electronic data exchange with the European Customs authorities.

AEO Certification

We are the only software supplier to have AEO certification for direct electronic data exchange with the European Customs authorities.

TRIS Customs

With TRIS Customs Management Solution you can manage all your import, export and transit declarations, certificates and PLDA/AGS declarations. Includes fully automatic invoicing of Customs information.

TRIS Forwarding

TRIS Forwarding Management Solution (FMS) is a total solution developed in collaboration with the main actors in the logistics supply chain. It supports the full operational and financial file management, from offer to invoicing, including document management.

TRIS Warehouse

With TRIS Warehouse Management Solution you can manage all your operational steps from A to Z: planning, goods in, transfers, goods out etc. All combined with powerful file management: from offer to invoicing, including document management for the warehousing and transport activities.