

# Cargo with 'added' weight

## Our vision on responsible supply chains and our scope for action as a port

The Amsterdam port region is one of the world's key logistics hubs for the storage and transshipment of international cargo flows such as coal, minerals and cocoa as well as comparatively new cargo flows emerging due to the development of the biobased and circular economy. Some of these cargo flows come from countries where production involves environmental damage, poor working conditions or human rights violations while enforcement and supervision by local government are flawed. This triggers both questions and resistance in us as a port and among the general public. We believe that, as a link in the trading chain, we have a moral responsibility in this regard, and not just because Port of Amsterdam is queried about this fairly regularly. Driven by our ambition to be one of the most sustainable ports in Europe, we take these signals seriously. This is our vision on our role, our principles and our scope for action with regard to 'cargo with added weight.'

### Responsible supply chains

The growing demand for transparency in supply chains, or insight into the origins of raw materials and products, is a significant development throughout society in general. And increasingly, the public debate focuses not only on the need for supply chain transparency but also on placing (potential) incidents at businesses in the supply chain on the agenda. For example, various nature conservation and human rights organisations have highlighted that certain raw materials that pass through the Port of Amsterdam



come from areas where human rights have been violated or where their extraction involves environmental offences and a lack of enforcement by the local government. Examples are provided by 'The Dark side of Coal', the report by the peace organisation Pax on



the consequences of mining for the inhabitants of the Cesar mining region, or the report published by Public Eye about high-sulphur blended diesel fuel that is exported from Amsterdam and elsewhere to West Africa. These complex international issues call for active engagement by all international players in the trading chain, in our opinion, on the basis of their own individual role, influence, knowledge and experience.

Port of Amsterdam has three core tasks: new business establishment, building infrastructure and handling shipping. We have two different roles in the cargo flow supply chain. On the one hand, we form a logistics hub in the trading chain for temporary storage and transit of raw materials. On the other hand, raw materials are purchased and processed by the businesses established in the port area. These different roles determine the varying scope of our involvement. In the second case, for instance, we are able to exert greater influence by engaging in dialogue with our customers and by stimulating responsible trading chains through our location policy. By contrast, our influence in the first case, the transit and storage of goods as such, is limited. But in both roles, we want to know about any relevant issues. That is our starting point. We *examine* the social responsibility risks for the various cargo flows and map them. We also consider the initiatives taken in the various raw materials chains (cocoa, minerals, coal) to

reduce those risks or to contribute to improving conditions. We are pleased to join suitable social responsibility initiatives in the supply chain, such as BetterCoal, in which we *participate*. We regularly *facilitate* meetings and start off the dialogue between the various partners in the chain such as businesses, NGOs, government and shipping companies. Lastly, we stimulate sustainable or socially responsible front-runners, which we are keen to welcome in the port area. We have developed these initiatives in further detail in an approach to implement our supply chain responsibility in practice. This is anchored by the principle that if action at a political level is required we will seek to collaborate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our prime contact for that purpose.

### Principles

Taking responsibility is one of the four core values of Port of Amsterdam. We feel responsible for the social, ecological and economic impact of our activities. This informs our vision for corporate social responsibility. Amsterdam's port has been interlinked with the city of Amsterdam for 750 years. As a port, we are not just entwined with the city but also connected with the region, the European hinterland and large parts of the world. Accordingly, the theme of 'responsible supply chains' is one of the five sustainability topics defined in our [Sustainability agenda](#). This agenda is part of our Strategy 2017-2021.

The following principles support us in optimising the implementation of our supply chain responsibility:

- > We contribute to the achievement of the UN's [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), endorse the [OECD guidelines](#) and act in accordance with them;
- > We promote sustainability in our supply chain;
- > We actively participate in platforms on supply chain responsibility and play an active role by placing these topics on the agenda, organising seminars and initiating and maintaining dialogue.

We apply and actively promote these principles in our chain and in the platforms in which we participate, for instance with the other sea ports. Thus we are examining the actual application of the OECD guidelines together with the other Dutch sea ports,



for instance. Similarly, we are also placing international corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the agenda among the international port community, often through our membership of national or international maritime organisations. We also play an active role in the [World Port Sustainability Program](#), which was launched in 2018 by the International Association for Ports and Harbours (IAPH).

Finding solutions for major issues extends beyond the scope of influence of our port by itself. Feeling responsibility is not always the same as having the scope for achieving improvement or change. Nonetheless, we believe we have to start somewhere and we do so by listening, examining, stimulating, facilitating and participating where that is possible. For instance, we join national and international lobby organisations and enter into dialogue with non-governmental organisations.

Cargo flows and trading chains are the foundation of Port of Amsterdam. We focus on collaborating with our customers, who are also a link in the chain and are faced with the same complex themes. We will assume our responsibility here and exert influence where possible. Sometimes by means of dialogue only, and sometimes by action as well. But always with the best intentions and in cooperation with others.

*This vision, 'Cargo with added weight', is based on the study of the OECD guidelines. Besides this vision, we are working on an approach to structure our actions and specifically implement our supply chain responsibility.*