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The Power to Lead

As a country bound by rivers and sea, the Netherlands has long had an intense love-hate relationship with water. Obviously with over 60% of the population living below sea level, the struggle against the water is an ongoing effort. Yet the proximity to water also offers a multitude of opportunities for long-term economic growth and employment. Netherlands has learned to take full advantage of the possibilities the water offers.

The development of dikes, artificial islands, harbours, offshore, maritime transport and fisheries are all clear examples of this. Harbour companies, offshore, maritime construction, navy, fisheries, seagoing and inland shipping, shipbuilders, maritime suppliers and service companies form a strong maritime industry. An industry with a total added value of more than 12 billion euros, offering work to almost 200,000 people.

Shipbuilding is at the core of this industry. It employs 50,000 people in the Dutch manufacturing industry, and delivers highly innovative vessels to all maritime sectors. The shipbuilding industry works closely with Knowledge Centres such as MARIN, TU Delft, TNO and the Royal Naval Institute. This allows the continuing development and production of extremely complex and innovative products.

The positive developments perceived in the shipbuilding industry at the end of 2005 have continued to gain strength in 2006 and the first half of 2007. In 2006, a total of 230 seagoing vessels were delivered. The order intake of almost 2.5 billion euros has exceeded that of 2005. Next to the new seagoing vessels, the naval shipbuilding business is also booming and is booked full until 2010 with orders for both the Royal Dutch Navy as well as export. The ship maintenance and conversion industry saw a sharp rise from 250 million euros in 2005 to 525 million euros in 2006. Small shipbuilding recorded an order intake of 370 million euros and the large yacht building industry saw an increase in order intake from 700 million euros in 2005 to 1.1 billion euros in 2006.

Shipbuilding is an industry with a future. Rising sea levels and shortage of living space will offer opportunities for large dredging operations. As congestion on the roads worsens, river and sea transportation will grow. Increased demand for oil and gas will stimulate the offshore industry. Marine recreation will grow, expanding the market for yachts. Fishing will develop alternatives such as fish farms in the North Sea. And the defence industry will shift its focus toward minor conflicts and coastal protection, creating space for innovative concepts. The Dutch shipbuilding industry has the people, technology, knowledge, and strategy to be a world leader in a thriving global industry. Now, and in the future.



Ruud Schouten
Director VNSI

Ship Building

i n d u s t r y

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Cover Photo: Aerial view of Keppel Verolme's premises in Rotterdam-Botlek. 2007 is the yard's 50th anniversary year of providing excellent services to the offshore and marine industry.

Photo courtesy of Keppel Verolme (photographer Ruud van Leeuwen).