



Katoen Natie response to the public consultation on the new National Planning Framework

Katoen Natie (KTN) is a global supplier of logistics and distribution services with facilities in Europe, the Far East, North and South America and Africa.

KTN combines port operations, engineering and technology to offer worldwide, tailor-made solutions to a range of industries including the chemicals, food and transport industries, as well as consumer goods, electronics and retail sectors.

KTN welcomes the opportunity to respond to this important consultation on the new National Planning Framework – ‘Ireland 2040 – Our Plan’ given our ambitions to invest in, and develop, Irish port infrastructure such as port terminals. The NPF aims to set a new strategic planning and development context for Ireland and all its regions through the co-ordination of a range of national, regional and local authority policies/plans. In order to allow for the robust, sustainable and well-connected ports capable of offering services on an appropriate scale and compete internationally, KTN believes the Plan should align with the recommendations of the National Port Policy.

In the context of a competitive port environment, we propose to address measures to achieve effective regional development, focus on the development of infrastructure that can deliver national benefit and manage the planning and development process so that the right development occurs with regards to marine development.

National Ports Policy

The core objective of the National Ports Policy, published in 2013, is to facilitate a competitive and effective market for maritime transport services. The long-term international trend in ports and shipping is toward increased consolidation of resources in order to achieve optimum efficiencies of scale. This has knock-on effects in terms of vessel size, the depths of water required at ports and the type and scale of port hinterland transport connections. The Policy aims to ensure that the planning and development of large-scale infrastructure such as commercial port development is based on a long-term vision that better places Irish ports to compete internationally, and underlines the Government’s objectives of pursuing mechanisms for private-sector investment in the port sector.¹

The Policy explains how the vast majority of our port infrastructure is owned by the State. The current structure of the State commercial ports sector is that of independent commercial entities, each required to further develop their individual commercial business. Competition within the sector exists both in terms of inter-port competition and indeed intra-port competition, as evidenced in the competing licensed private-sector operated

¹ <http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/node/add/content-publication/National%20Ports%20Policy%202013.PDF>



terminals within the Dublin port estate as well as the competing private-sector service providers operating in various ports.²

It continues by stating that competition between ports can be limited due to their geographical location and thus accessibility to major shipping routes and domestic marketplaces. Therefore, in order to address the National Planning Framework's goals of measures to achieve effective regional development and the development of infrastructure that can deliver national benefit, it should take cognisance of the strengthening of a landlord-type operating model to counter the natural advantage enjoyed by certain ports. This will provide for increased levels of private sector investment in ports which will allow for continued intra-port competition between the privately operated port terminals within the port estate. It will also allow for intra-port competition, as well as the emergence of robust, sustainable and well-connected ports capable of offering services on an appropriate scale.³

According to the Policy, the Government is open to a variety of mechanisms for private-sector investment in the port sector such as the landlord port model. The National Ports Policy also states it will consider investment in future port expansion through the possible sale of equity stakes, public-private partnership-type arrangements, build-operate transfer arrangements, or other similar proposals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the National Planning Framework – *'Ireland 2040 – Our Plan'* should align with the objectives of the National Ports Policy in order to realise attract the necessary levels of investment to develop sustainable and well-connected ports capable of offering services on an appropriate scale and compete internationally.

² <http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/node/add/content-publication/National%20Ports%20Policy%202013.PDF>

³ <http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/node/add/content-publication/National%20Ports%20Policy%202013.PDF>