



**NextGen
District**
By Port of Antwerp

First candidates for NextGen District at port of Antwerp announced

Start of second round of market consultation for pioneers in circularity

Last October, Port of Antwerp launched the first round of a market consultation for the NextGen District, the former General Motors site in the port area. As a result of this consultation, we are starting conversations with the first concessionaire candidates that meet the criteria for making the 88-hectare site a hotspot for circular economy. The second round of the consultation starts on 10 June 2021. This second round aims to attract innovative players in the circular process and construction industry that are contributing to the transition to a climate-neutral society.



First candidates announced

The NextGen District at the port of Antwerp, the 88-hectare former General Motors site, will be transformed into a hotspot for the circular economy. Here, 'end-of-life products' will be given a second or third life, circular carbon solutions will be researched, and experiments with renewable energy will be conducted. Port of Antwerp consciously chose to reserve this large area close to Europe's largest chemical cluster for the circular economy in order that it might contribute to the transition to a climate-neutral society. A market consultation was launched in October 2020 to attract national and international investors, the first round of which is now complete. As a result of this, conversations have begun with a number of candidates that meet the predetermined criteria, with the aim of granting a concession.

Game-changers in the circular economy

The candidates are all pioneers in the field of circularity. Let us introduce a few of them now:

- The first is *Biondoil*, a pioneer in the development of 2nd-generation biofuels and biochemicals, which wants to locate a refinery on the NextGen site.

- *Laupat Industries* converts car tyre waste into new raw materials, such as green oil, steel and hydrogen. The process is CO₂-free and energy-neutral. The CO₂-free and energy-neutral project thus achieves a material valorisation of at least 95%.
- *Novali* is another candidate for a spot on the site. The company is developing and manufacturing the next generation of lithium batteries for the automotive industry and stationary energy storage.
- Another candidate is *Triple Helix' Molecules as a Service* (THX MaaS). Their project, SurePUre, is a pilot factory for the recycling of polyurethane foam and PET dishes, which are converted into polyols.

In the coming weeks, talks will be held with all the candidates, in which the companies concerned must elaborate further upon their case. Alongside feasibility, the projects will also be assessed for future-proofing, innovative value, climate impact and versatility for a final decision.

Continuation of market consultation: still room for modernisers in the circular economy

Now the first round of the market consultation is complete, Port of Antwerp is launching the second round of this consultation on 10 June on its website. By working through several different consultations, as many companies active in the 'new economy' and working with the latest evolutionary technologies as possible will get the chance to submit their candidacy at various points. Additional candidates will be asked to submit their project proposals by 20 October 2021. The same conditions as for the first round of the consultation will apply here too: innovative players that want to stimulate the circular economy. This specifically concerns candidates with core activities in the circular process industry and in the manufacturing industry, with a focus on the energy transition. A procedure for NextGen Demo will also follow after the summer, aimed at parties looking for space for an innovative pilot installation.

Jacques Vandermeiren, CEO of Port of Antwerp. *“Port of Antwerp wants and needs to take a pioneering role in the energy transition. The port of Antwerp is home to the largest chemical cluster in Europe. We intend to strengthen, anchor and support this cluster in the transition to a carbon-*

neutral and circular economy. The aim is for NextGen District to grow into a hub for innovation and cross-pollination in the circular economy, giving oxygen to the next generation. The selected candidates' projects are a perfect reflection of our ambition: innovation, daring and circularity.”

Port alderwoman Annick De Ridder: “With the NextGen District, we are aiming to create hundreds of new jobs that will further contribute to the sustainable growth of our port. This testing ground for technological and sustainable innovation, where pioneers are given the room to grow, will contribute to the strengthening, synergy and diversification of the port platform. Moreover, this is the ideal location to accelerate the transition in the Antwerp chemical cluster. As such, we are continuing to focus on the added value of the future and therefore also on our prosperity.”

<https://www.portofantwerp.com/en/nextgendistrict>