



Press release

Gateway Basel Nord: ecological concept enables modal shift

Basel, 9 October 2020. Gateway Basel Nord (GBN) and 'Hafenbecken 3' port form a key project for shifting freight transport from road to rail, as approved by the Swiss people. However, the project will only be given the go-ahead if it meets the Federal Office for the Environment's (FOEN) stringent legal environmental requirements. In response, GBN has set out a binding and professional prepared nature protection plan.

The Basel Rhine ports are the only point in Switzerland where the main north-south axes of road, rail and waterways meet. Previously 92% of the goods that arrived here by ship were then transported by road and just 8% by rail. In future, at least half of all freight will continue its journey by rail. This will cut HGV journeys by 100,000 a year. This environmental protection measure will reduce noise, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. To make modal shift from road to rail possible, the Gateway Basel Nord trimodal transshipment terminal and the 'Hafenbecken 3' port must be constructed.

20 years ago Deutsche Bahn operated a large marshalling yard on the site proposed for the terminal. Important species have since established themselves on the disused site. It has become an area of dry grasslands and pasture of national importance covering 20 hectares. Under law the developers must create an equivalent replacement area to perform the same function. Planning permission will only be granted if the compensatory measures in the region meet strict legal requirements that are approved and monitored by the Federal Office for the Environment's (FOEN).

In response, Gateway Basel Nord (GBN) and Port of Switzerland, with support from biologists and environmental scientists, has produced a binding plan. It will turn an area four times the size of that being developed by GBN and 'Hafenbecken 3' into new dry grasslands in Basel and its surrounding area. A continuous, 60-metre-wide network corridor will also be retained across the gateway and the adjacent railway project so that species in the Upper Rhine Valley can continue to migrate.

Adequate replacement space for flora and fauna

GBN will cover a total of 11.5 hectares in northern Basel. Only part of that is being covered over, with rail and ballast continuing to cover the rest of the area, like the original marshalling yard. Of the defined environmental replacement areas four times the size of the development site, 20 hectares are located directly in the Muttenz marshalling yard and 10.7 hectares in areas adjacent to railways and along the Birsfelden/Auhafen port railway. A further 8.6 hectares have been designated in Lange Erlen and 6.5 hectares in the Hard district in Pratteln. This plan meets the main requirement of linking the dry grassland areas.

Sustainable projects being planned

The plan is to implement environmental improvement measures which will create new dry, warm habitats for animal and plant species over 45.8 hectares. Biodiverse dry grasslands will be created in Lange Erlen in place of farmland. The current Hard Pratteln commercial forest will be transformed into a dry, warm forest providing a habitat for numerous species and complex ecosystems.

The extensive improvements within the Muttenz marshalling yard will create habitats similar to the areas found in the former Baden marshalling yard. There will also be warm, dry habitats and migratory corridors around the marshalling yard and the Birsfelden/Auhafen port railway which will create a large network of habitats with the existing Klingenthal amphibian spawning area.

FOEN measures the quality of the improvement measures with what are known as 'nature points'. The 'nature points' awarded exceed the number of points lost due to the new development by GBN.

This means the environmental plan for the Gateway Basel Nord trimodal terminal fully meets the legal requirements and also underlines the fact that the developer

takes responsibility to improve the migratory corridors in the Rhine Valley and enhance the dry, warm habitat in the region seriously.

Gateway Basel Nord AG:

The three Swiss logistics and transport companies Contargo, Hupac and SBB Cargo established Gateway Basel Nord AG in June 2015. The company, with its headquarters in Basel, is planning and developing the Gateway Basel Nord project for Swiss intermodal import/export transport.

Contact:

Claudia Bracher Wolfensberger

Media spokesperson

Tel. 079 652 01 42

claudia.bracher@ch.rhenus.com

The Port of Switzerland:

The Port of Switzerland is the national transport hub that connects Switzerland to the world's oceans. It is planning and developing the new 'Hafenbecken 3' port to link Rhine shipping transport to the terminal.

Contact:

Simon Oberbeck

Media spokesperson

Tel. 61 639 95 97

simon.oberbeck@portof.ch

Further information and images: <http://www.gateway-baselnord.com>