

Safe, cost-efficient and traceable sample management



In the Benelux countries, Intertek has sites in Rotterdam, Antwerp, Ghent and Geleen. It also has various satellite offices in the ports. They provide a wide range of laboratory and inspection services in sectors including the (petro-)chemicals, minerals, agriprocessing and plastics industry. They analyse, inspect and certify products including oils and lubricants, (bio)fuels, chemicals, monomers and polymer additives. Customers demand that they keep these samples for a certain period of time, which implies storage capacity and risks. Frank van Broekhoven, Laboratory Manager Cargo & Analytical Assessment for Belgium and the Netherlands, and Loe Froijen, Facility & Plant Integrity Manager Benelux tell us why they chose to outsource this role to Indaver.



Loe Froijen and Frank van Broekhoven

Outsourcing sample management and storage

“Until recently, Intertek handled the storage and management of all samples itself”, explains Froijen. “Under the waste contract with Indaver, there was already a ‘storage’ element, for which Kevin Thomaes, part-time Indaver on-site operator/warehouseman was recruited. We noticed in recent years that the volume was exceeding our available space at the Intertek site in Antwerp, and the legislation on transport of hazardous goods was becoming more and more complex. So we were on the lookout for a reliable partner who had both the storage capacity and the necessary knowledge about storing and handling samples and transporting them. Our inspectors work 24/7, and operate mainly in the large port cities where a lot of maritime cargo has to be tested. Samples are received very regularly and we just didn’t have enough space. Either we would have had to expand, which meant we would have had to apply for planning permission, evaluate our site and build a shed or outsource the job to experts. We weighed up the pros and cons, and it didn’t take us very long to work it out: Indaver was the ideal partner” says Froijen.

License to Operate & guaranteed cost savings

“Thanks to the sample storage at Indaver in Kallo, Intertek no longer needs to use specialised courier services or have its own inspectors driving unnecessary journeys”, says van Broekhoven. Van Broekhoven adds: “Now we can devote our site exclusively to our core business activities, and we don’t have to set aside space for peripheral infrastructure.

Depending on the substance and the sample type, sometimes our samples have to be kept for up to 3 years so that a second opinion can be given about the sample. That volume soon mounts up. Thanks to the external sample management at Indaver, now we still have a minimal stock where samples are kept for a maximum of 14 days. The samples go into a labelled box and are stored for the defined retention period. That is all registered in a retain module in LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) specially developed by Intertek. Indaver arranges a weekly collection on the Intertek site in Antwerp and Ghent. They also deliver the boxes, yellow for the sample storage and red for the waste. On an annual basis, we are talking about more than 62 tonnes of boxes filled with samples. The fact that Indaver is a one-stop-shop partner makes life that much easier for us.”

Safe and traceable sample management

“Both Intertek and Indaver know exactly where every box is. The barcode on the box is scanned once the box has been filled at Intertek, when it leaves the premises and arrives at Indaver in Kallo. If Intertek has to provide a second opinion on the sample, it recalls the box from Indaver. Operator Keven brings them back when he comes to make his weekly collection, or earlier if necessary. We cut the box open, make the sample available for a counter-analysis and then put everything into a new box which is scanned again. In this way, we have an excellent, up-to-date picture of where all samples are at a given time. After the mandatory storage period, the sample boxes go back to Indaver Antwerp to

be processed in the rotary kiln incinerators. So we recover energy from them too, despite the fact that these are hazardous or complex substances. Some customers want to see the destruction certificates for their samples, and our easy-to-understand e-reporting enables us to bring them up at the press of a button”, explains van Broekhoven.

Reorganisation and training

“It takes all the strain off Intertek” adds Froijen. “Indaver helped us to clean up the warehouse, re-arranged it, labelled the samples and divided them into categories, and put clear labelling on the collection locations. In addition, Indaver organises training and awareness sessions. That helps our laboratory technicians to get to grips with the new approach and prevent risks. Together with the Indaver team consisting of Tom Hellemans, Head of Waste Transfer Kallo Indaver, operator Kevin Thomaes and Project Managers An Vermeersch and Wannes Minne, our housekeeping has become quite a bit more cost-efficient and safer. One major advantage is that our sample manager is also the firm that has the disposal facilities. So there are short chains of command if we need to take decisions fast, and if we need advice about legislation”, Froijen emphasises. “Indeed”, adds Van Broekhoven. “Our colleagues in Geleen (NL) also heard about the benefits of working with Indaver, and as from 2018, Indaver will also be handling all the sample and waste management there too”.

It takes all the strain off Intertek

Safe & traceable storage

Our housekeeping is more efficient now