

## Rotterdam organisations join forces in Circularity Center

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**The Port of Rotterdam Authority, Rabobank Rotterdam, BIKKER & Company and Van Gansewinkel have joined forces to establish the new Circularity Center. The Circularity Center focuses on knowledge development and business development in the circular economy. The founding organisations share an ambition to re-use raw materials and material components, as well as create new revenue models and accelerate the transition towards a circular economy.**

New times require new concepts and new methods and approaches. And the fact that such innovations have now converged in Rotterdam comes as no surprise. In a study commissioned by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, McKinsey calculated that the European industry could receive a boost of some EUR 500 billion if it were to wholeheartedly adopt the principles of a circular economy. As Europe's largest port and distribution hub, Rotterdam is the logical centre for recycling, take-back logistics and alternative resources and material flows.

The initiators have appointed Florens Slob (1974) as Managing Director. He will be setting up the centre in close collaboration with the partners. Slob studied business administration at Erasmus University Rotterdam and has nearly 15 years' experience in recycling and waste management. Slob, who is also currently Business Development director at Van Gansewinkel, says: *"It's wonderful to work with these partners and be able to make a tangible contribution to the circular economy – and all the opportunities this creates for the sector."*

Van Gansewinkel already regularly forms a vital link in implementing new circular projects by recovering valuable raw materials from today's waste. Van Gansewinkel CEO, Cees van Gent: *"Van Gansewinkel has a wealth of knowledge that can be used to help build a circular economy. In order to accelerate the process, partnerships and collaboration play a vital role in concrete projects. It's about translating circular concepts and ideas into concrete business for today. That's what we intend to achieve together in the Circularity Center."*

One of the first projects to be supported by the Circularity Center is 'Plastic to Oil'. Researchers will study which methods and applications can be employed to establish a production location where plastic residual streams can be 'cracked

back' into oil and in the second phase back into plastics.

Leendert Bikker is sure that the Circularity Center has excellent prospects: *"After decades of ecological idealism, we can now start earning money by going green, which is great. Throughout history, we can see that the real technological and economic breakthroughs in technology and the economy tend to be accelerated by the 'bottom line'."*

Rabobank and the Port Authority were responsible for organising the 'Pathways to a Circular Economy' back in 2012, and are convinced that a circular economy will create great opportunities for the region and the Dutch economy in general. Coert Beerman, CEO Rabobank Rotterdam: *"This initiative was not just born from a sense of social responsibility. Above all, we believe that closing production loops will create strategic advantages for businesses, as this not only requires fewer of our scarce raw materials and energy, it also encourages collaboration and innovation."* For Beerman, the new centre's main strength will be its pragmatic character: *"The focus needs to lie on creating business cases which attract investment by companies, investors and banks."*

Allard Castelein, CEO of the Port of Rotterdam Authority: *"Over the next decades, the Port Authority aims to really start the transition towards a circular economy. This requires us to change our way of thinking and working: use far fewer raw materials, make optimum use of these resources and, above all, recycle them. This will enable us to close the loops. The Circularity Center is another step on our route towards concrete projects. Projects that are intended to help us attract new forms of economic activity to Rotterdam, in addition to more traditional manufacturing approaches. This way, we can ensure that the port continues to be one of the mainstays of Dutch prosperity in the second half of the 21st century."*



standing from left to right: Cees van Gent - CEO Van Gansewinkel / Allard Castelein - president-directeur Havenbedrijf Rotterdam / Coert Beerman, CEO Rabobank Rotterdam  
seated left to right: Leendert Bikker – Founder Bikker & Company / Florens Slob - Managing Director Circularity Center / Nico van Dooren - CEO Havenbedrijf Rotterdam

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