

# From Speedgate to Secure Key: SCMP Milestones in 2024

To maintain its position as Europe's top tier air cargo hub, Schiphol must continue to innovate. In 2024, the Smart Cargo Mainport Program (SCMP) took significant steps to further strengthen the airport as the smartest cargo hub. What were these concrete milestones of 2024? And how will they bring Schiphol closer to its vision of an efficient and digital airport?

The SCMP program, launched in 2015, aims to make Schiphol retain its leading role in air cargo. The program centers around innovation, wherein active representation from various stakeholders collaborate on solutions for the cargo community, supported by Royal Schiphol Group, Cargonaut, and Air Cargo Netherlands (ACN). Royal Schiphol Group manages the project organization.

"SCMP facilitates collaboration between handlers, airlines, forwarders, carriers, and other stakeholders to improve and digitise air cargo processes in and around the airport," says program manager Luc Scheidel. "The goal is to provide efficient, safe, and sustainable cargo flows to maintain our competitive edge and be in the lead in secure air freight. This will ensure that we remain competitive in the future."

#### Digitization as the Key

Digitisation is the cornerstone of SCMP. Maarten van As, Managing Director of ACN, explains that for processes to be efficient, handlers need precise information about incoming landside transport. "Within the air cargo chain, long waiting times for trucks - particularly towards the end of the week - not only causes costly delays but also increases environmental impact. By unlocking the right information in a timely manner digitally, we make processes more predictable and plannable. Ultimately, we aim for a digital truckslot planning system wherein trucks load and unload at agreed upon times.

*"By unlocking the right information in a timely manner digitally, we make processes more predictable and plannable."*

Maarten van As, Managing Director ACN

This system will minimise congestion and ensure smoother flow."

#### A Secure Chain

To accomplish all this, all cargo flows in and around Schiphol - from imports and exports to Road Feeder Services (RFS) - must be accounted for. A joint digital approach connecting all chain partners is hereby essential.

Johan Star, project manager: "SCMP truly exists for and is maintained by the community. Over a hundred companies - from airlines to carriers - work together on a new IT-supported methodology. By virtue of the ACN network, the entire cargo chain is involved. We connect systems, share data, and are collectively building a 'digital highway', that will become the new standard."

#### Previous Projects

Since the launch of the SCMP, significant strides have been made in the digitisation of air cargo processes at Schiphol. For instance, in 2022, the digital pre-notification of export cargo using eLink became the standard, enabling nearly 90% of shipments to pass through handling processes 30 minutes faster. Additionally, the assignment of import cargo has been fully digitised through Automated Nomination. Furthermore, by consolidating cargo in the Milkrun project, the number of transport movements - and consequently, CO2 emissions - at the airport have been significantly reduced. All these initiatives have laid the groundwork for further optimisation in 2024.

Schiphol is part of the Digital Infrastructure Logistics (DIL) program, in which Dutch mainports and other chain partners collaborate to further accelerate the digital exchange of data within freight transport. SCMP ensures that air cargo is connected to the Basic Data Infrastructure (BDI), which is currently under development. A pilot project has been set up to explore how data can be securely shared with non-community parties, while maintaining control by the data owner. New developments - such as Secure Import and RFS - are also being implemented in accordance with BDI principles.



Johan Star, Maarten van As and Luc Scheidel



## 2024 achievements

### Digital Check-In

In December, an automatic Speedgate equipped with license plate recognition was installed at Terminal 9, allowing trucks to exit the premises more quickly. “Previously, a sliding gate that only opened during peak hours was used, without any form of digital registration,” Johan explains. “Within a digital process, you want to measure and analyse every step. The Speedgate now makes this possible, improving both physical and digital flows. This not only accelerates throughput but also enhances safety and provides better information. We’ve already seen the benefits at Terminal 11 and successfully applied that experience here.”

### Secure Import

This year saw the final preparations for Secure Import, set to launch in 2025. Secure Import will significantly enhance the security of streams of import goods at Schiphol. The system provides a more efficient and secure handling process, supported by IT-systems from Cargonaut and SmartLOXS. It achieves this by ensuring that only authorised parties have access to the goods. Lastly, the system works in conjunction with services such as Automated Nomination and the ACN pass.

Johan: “From the moment a plane carrying the shipment is airborne, the forwarder automatically receives a notification. They then appoint a trusted carrier, who will assign a trucker to collect the shipment. Only when all steps have been correctly completed, the system will generate a Secure Key or QR code for the trucker. Secure Import thus increases control, reduces the risk of fraud, and makes the process fully traceable.”



*“Looking at other airports around the world, we can be proud of what we already have achieved; we truly have struck gold here.”*

*Luc Scheidel, programmamanager SCMP*

Implementation is being carried out in two phases. Phase 1, digital pre-registration, has already started. Chain processes, agreement schemes, IT-development, and cost distribution have been completed. Software testing started in November 2024 with an adaptation period lasting until February 2025. Phase 2 will centre around automating the digital transfer and receipt of goods within warehouses.

### Milkrun Export

Milkrun Export, a follow-up to the successful Milkrun Import project, officially went live in 2024. According to Maarten van As, Milkrun Export is a smart logistics concept, utilising eLink to pre-register export shipments. “While Milkrun Import transports goods from a single handler to multiple forwarders, Milkrun Export on the other hand collects shipments from various forwarders and delivers them bundled to a single handler. This all results in better-loaded trucks, fewer transport movements, shorter waiting times, and reduced CO2 emissions.”

After a successful pilot phase, in which carriers, forwarders, and handlers jointly tested the underlying processes, the project officially launched in early December of 2024.

### Road Feeder Services (RFS)

Beyond local imports and exports, RFS flows are crucial for air cargo at Schiphol. RFS flows involve goods transported between airports by road, retaining their air cargo status, including Air Waybills and customs checks. This ‘air-replacement road transport’ accounts for 30 to 40% of total cargo flows to and from Schiphol.

RFS project manager Erwin de Jager emphasises the importance of integrating international RFS data to gain a comprehensive overview of all air cargo flows.

Erwin de Jager: “The RFS project focuses on digitising and integrating these flows to enable faster and more efficient information exchange between chain partners. We are working on a digital pre-registration system, though this has proven more complex than expected. While significant progress has been made, the project has faced certain delays. Chain processes, agreement schemes, and IT-design have all been completed, but discussions about cost distribution continue to arise. Software development has only addressed part of the project scope this year. Nonetheless, we

now have a much better insight into various flows and data exchange needs. Notwithstanding all these hurdles, support for the project remains strong within the SCMP community. We are currently in the process of determining which part of international cargo traffic to integrate first in 2025 and are looking into ways to enhance the scope for further expansion.”

### ACN-pass

The project to digitise the traditional paper ACN-pass, which confirms the transfer of goods, has been postponed to 2025. Before the transition to a digital version can take place, the IT-infrastructure must be updated.

### Digital Truckslot Planning

Digital Truckslot Planning (DTP) is the centrepiece of Schiphol’s air cargo digitisation efforts. It functions as a portal for booking timeslots with handlers. For example, carriers can book a timeslot to have goods delivered at 1:00 PM, assigned to a specific trucker and truck. This can even be combined with import shipments.

The DTP portal provides an overview of available timeslots, but the actual planning occurs in the handlers’ systems. “Handlers determine where and when trucks can be fitted into the schedule based on their own capacity. The main goal is to eventually integrate these systems into one central truckslot planning portal, enabling carriers to view all available slots across multiple handlers in one system, without logging into different platforms,” Johan explains. “By linking carriers’ digital pre-registrations to handlers’ dock planning systems, parties can collaborate efficiently and transparently, sharing only the necessary information based on a need-to-know basis.”

Truck slot planning is currently in the preparatory phase, with chain processes, agreement schemes, and IT-design already in place. The coming years our focus will be on further integration and implementation of the system.

### A License to Operate

The success of SCMP pivots entirely on collaboration, Johan emphasises. “We make clear agreement schemes and stick to them. No one is in charge; everyone plays their substantive role and contributes the needed expertise. Frontrunners set the direction, but the real results come from the combined expertise of all contributing parties.” “Digitisation has become the *license to operate* at Schiphol. Those unwilling to adapt, will be left behind. For some, the pace is too slow; for others, it’s too fast. But together, we are building something bigger. We invest in trust and communication, and vet plans through ACN’s sector councils to avoid group thinking as much as possible. This program is meant for the entire cargo community, and we strive to



ensure everyone knows what’s coming their way through our various channels. This is about more than digitisation; it’s a cultural shift.”

### Golden Opportunities

Luc Scheidel reflects on a year of remarkable progress: “We have maintained strong collaboration within the community and continue to discuss essential conditions, such as aligning planning with all parties involved.” Looking ahead to 2025, he highlights the relocation of dnata to their new state-of-the-art cargo facility, the progress of the RFS project, and the broader implementation of Secure Import as key milestones. “The further development of Digital Truckslot Planning in accordance with our handlers will also bring us closer to a seamless airport logistics chain.”

“We are continuously gaining a better insight into cargo flows to Schiphol, whether by air or road. Schiphol and ACN are also members of Amsterdam Logistics, where we coordinate logistics improvements with the municipality, province, and other key ‘ports’ such as the Seaport, Royal FloraHolland, and Greenport. By continuing to invest in an ever-evolving efficient hub, we will ensure the Netherlands remains strategically autonomous, with strong connections and robust processes. Looking at other airports, we can be proud of what we’ve achieved. And yes, we may complain sometimes, but we really have a golden opportunity here.”

*“Digital Truckslot Planning is the golden puzzle piece where all processes come together.”*

*Johan Star, Project Manager SCMP*