

Port Authority and Municipality of Rotterdam launch blockchain technology field lab

Rotterdam, September 21, 2017 - **The Municipality of Rotterdam and the Port of Rotterdam Authority are jointly launching a field lab today for the development of concrete applications and solutions based on blockchain technology. The new applied research lab has been christened 'BlockLab'.**

BlockLab is an initiative of the Port of Rotterdam Authority and the Municipality of Rotterdam, who will also be financing the project. In addition, the lab is supported by the regional development corporation InnovationQuarter. The field lab will be jointly opened by Port Authority President and CEO Allard Castelein, Rotterdam's Deputy Mayor for Economic Affairs Maarten Struijvenberg and the Director of InnovationQuarter, Rinke Zonneveld. During the event, the partners will not only be presenting the lab's team and ambitions, but also the first practical applications of its research, which were developed during the start-up phase.

Transactions without an intermediary

Blockchain is seen as one of the most crucial fields of innovation today. The basic idea behind the technology is that users can conduct transactions without involving a third party. Data technology guarantees the necessary checks and balances and ensures that the transaction is processed automatically. This makes it possible to structure large-scale networks, chains and markets far more efficiently than before – without the need for a dominant, regulating party. The technology can be used by companies, individuals and even machines. For example, blockchain is the underlying technology for the cryptocurrency bitcoin.

Next economy

"There's this huge buzz about 'blockchain', but actually, there aren't that many fully functional applications," says Struijvenberg. "We'll be changing this with BlockLab. This is important, because we need real innovations to launch the next economy. And blockchain can help us realise them."

Energy transition

For example, blockchain allows users to set up a finely meshed decentralised power network, in which companies can trade residual heat and city dwellers can trade electricity. This gives new impetus to the energy transition in the port and the city.

Cargo flows

"This alone makes it very interesting to us," adds Castelein. "But I'm also thinking of the numerous applications that can be realised within logistics chains thanks to blockchain, allowing us to organise cargo flows more efficiently. This step is seamlessly in line with our 'smartest port' ambitions."

Port logistics stock financing

One of the first concrete projects to be presented during the official opening is a blockchain application for stock financing in the port logistics sector, which was developed in partnership with Exact and ABN AMRO. In addition, it will be announced which innovation partners have been awarded funding for the development of blockchain applications for the energy sector.

Team and implementation

The BlockLab will be starting with a core team of five, who work from the Cambridge Innovation Center in Rotterdam. In the field lab, theoretical blockchain ideas are developed, tested and worked out into concrete opportunities in a real-world environment, together with consortia of developers and users. In addition, the lab will serve as a knowledge centre for the regional private sector. The team will be working together with Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences to develop a curriculum intended to marshal the influx of new talent.

More information or interview requests:

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