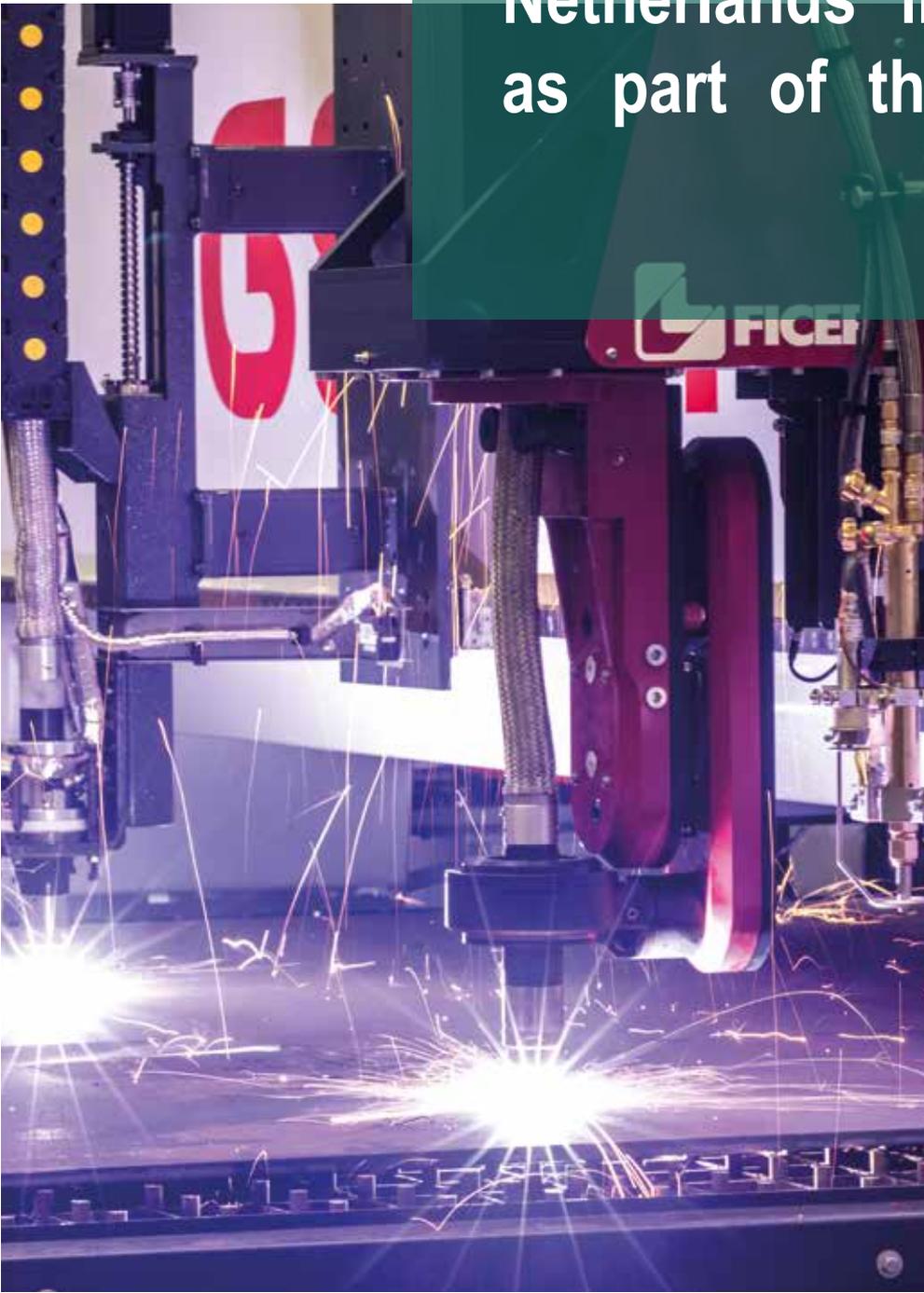




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The firm VAN DER SLUIS in the Netherlands invest in FICEP as part of their new facility



Frequently, in the history of steel fabrication firms they are unable to make the transition from one generation to the next because of lack of interest or devotion. The family business of Van der Sluis which started in 1934 and located in the city of Kampen in the Netherlands represents a stark exception from their



founding by Mr. L. M. Van der Sluis. He was the only employee and did not experience significant growth until his sons, Cees and Henk, took over the firm in 1973. At that time the firm had just 10 employees, but his sons had a much greater vision of how to grow the firm. Over the next years the firm grew to the peak of 300 employees. In 1996 René van der Sluis entered the managing board of directors and continues in this position as the largest shareholder after both Cees and



Henk retired in 2016. Presently, they employ a total of 680 people with the group of companies.

Installation Technology, Van der Sluis Agri and Van der Sluis Construction. These firms presently serve a customer base in the Netherlands where they are aggressively involved in housing construction, industrial building, off shore projects and the corresponding miscellaneous fabrication covering the projects' requirement for stairs and fencing.



*Arend Van der Kamp
 Manager*

When the firm first started, they performed the fabrication of steel wheels, which later transcended into agriculture and plumbing projects.

Later the diverse product focus of Van der Sluis evolved to create the operating firms of Van der Sluis

“FICEP was the firm that was able to provide technically the most advanced solutions such as their complementary drill spindle axes”



the precision that FICEP offered with their rack and pinion pincher system enabled us to offer superior accuracy than the alternative systems that we could have purchased.”

Were there any unexpected benefits that have influenced your business with the purchase and installation of the FICEP equipment?

“We are much more flexible in scheduling

During our visit to Van der Sluis we were able to sit down with Mr. Arend Van der Kamp, Manager, to ask several questions about the firm. He explained, “Prior to the construction of the new facility, we purchased our structural members drilled and cut to length. With the new facility, we had the space to install new automated systems to control the fabrication process in-house to exercise greater control of the delivery process. We searched for steel construction machinery that generated the most flexibility for our diverse fabrication opportunities. FICEP was the firm that was able to provide technically the most advanced solutions such as their complementary drill spindle axes. Accuracy in our business is demanded by our clients, and



Fully automatic FICEP system for beams processing, including a VALIANT drilling & sawing line and automatic loading/unloading handling

our production as we can quickly respond to the needs of our clients. Previously, we had to rely on the deliveries of outside vendors.”

What do you view as some of the capabilities



FICEP GEMINI Gantry System for plate burning with plasma bevel head, drilling, milling and automatic plate layout

that separate you from alternative fabricators?

“We perform our own engineering and have many years of experience that is a real benefit to our clients. This gives us the ability to now fabricate the complete package from the miscellaneous to the structural steel in-house without concerns for external deliveries. Currently, we upgraded to EN 1090 EXC 3 so we can provide building structures in excess of 70 meters in height.”

Where do you see the market heading in 2020 and beyond?

“I think it will get difficult for the mid-size firms. The small companies with little overhead will survi-

ve with the simple limited jobs. As the margins generally get smaller, you have to increase your production to cover your overhead. Labor cost will continue to increase. This, in conjunction with the difficulty in finding good workers, leaves a firm like us with no solution but to endorse automation.”

Inaccuracy in fabrication has serious ramifications. How have you found the accuracy tolerances of your FICEP equipment versus other CNC

“Accuracy is extremely important and the FICEP system excels in this area”

equipment that you have used for structural steel in the past?

“Accuracy is extremely important and the FICEP system excels in this area. At the moment we are capitalizing on this system’s accuracy by implementing FICEP’s scribing technology. Our goal is to eliminate the need for measuring tapes for any layout going forward.”

How do you address the requirement for the detailing of the structural steel? Is it handled internally or do you have outside firms generate the detailed drawings?

“We do all detailing in-house plus strength calculations where we can control more of the total

process. Presently, we use both Tekla and Con-
strusteel software to assist with these tasks.”

Mr. Arend Van der Kamp went on to explain “We have been able to grow our business over the years by satisfying customers with exceptional quality and competitive deliveries. The ability to now control more of the fabrication process internally opens up new opportunities for the firm with both existing and new clients.

“Many of the new clients cover a wider range of industries even outside our current focus of steel structures, offshore, energy transmission, wind power and miscellaneous fabrication such as stairs and fencing. This type of market expansion would not have been possible without such

labor-saving practices as scribing with the installation of the automated fabrication equipment from FICEP!”

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