

Press Release



18 December 2009

KBC is bringing its regional support services from the Ghent region together

KBC has decided, as part of its ongoing drive for greater efficiency and savings, to unite all the widely scattered support services around the Ghent region in a single location. From 2012, these services will be brought together in one modern, sustainable and efficient office building 'The Loop', on the site of Flanders Expo. By centralising its local and regional operations, KBC will save some 25 million euros over a period of 15 years compared to maintaining the status quo. KBC has already successfully carried out similar centralisation and optimisation of resources in Brussels, Leuven, Mechelen and Antwerp.

Developers Stasimo and the De Paepe Group, together with the end-user KBC will not release any financial details on this new-build project.

KBC's administrative and support services for the Ghent region are currently spread over six locations (*Gent Kouter, Gent Kouterdreef, Gent Kortrijksesteenweg, Gent Bellevue, Gent Zuid, and the Merelbeke training centre*). These include both owned and rented premises, some of which are due for substantial renovation in order to adapt them to today's modern needs. An in-depth internal study and business case showed that bringing these services together at a new location is more efficient, more environmentally friendly and cheaper than extending existing lease contracts and renovating existing buildings. A single new building requires less maintenance, is more energy-efficient and makes it feasible to accommodate the same number of employees more economically.

'The Loop' is a development by Stasimo/De Paepe Group with over 20 000 m² office space and underground parking for 430 cars and around 150 cycles (together with changing rooms and showers). The ground floor will have reception facilities and a modern company restaurant. KBC will occupy the building from mid-2012 onwards. 'The Loop' will house all the support services of KBC Bank and KBC Insurance currently spread throughout the Ghent region, the training centre for East and West Flanders, and around 400 IT specialists. The building will accommodate some 1200 employees in total. KBC is thus continuing to position itself as a major and active employer in the Ghent region.

The project is being constructed on the Flanders Expo site and meets all KBC's demanding accessibility criteria, so important to employees striving for a good Work/Life balance. Indeed, the new location offers greater opportunities to work locally, a fact that will certainly please the KBC employees concerned. The building will not only be highly accessible by car, being close to the E40 and the Ghent ring, but also by bike and public transport with a direct and frequent tram or bus service to St. Pieters railway station (+/- 8 minutes).

In line with its own 'Green Building Guidelines', KBC has classified 'The Loop' as a sustainable project with an Energy Rating of 70. This will be achieved through excellent insulation of walls and windows, a balance between glass and non-glass façade elements, environmentally performant technical installations and intelligent management systems of, for example, office lighting etc.

In preparation for the future centralisation and move to 'The Loop', KBC will sell all those properties it presently owns in the centre of Ghent, and cancel existing leasing contracts.

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The current bank branch (for retail and private banking customers) and the insurance agency on *de Kouter* will stay where they are, even after the sale. As exclusive discussions with an interested developer are ongoing, more information cannot be released at this stage.