



**IE** FOOD

The specialist for industrial buildings.

**COOP BERN**

**INSIGHT**



**Increasing capacity bottlenecks at the empty container center of the Coop distribution center in Bern-Brünnen prompted the company to completely revamp and expand its empty container logistics. Coop entrusted the industrial construction specialists at IE Food with planning the complex project in the densely built-up area.**

For a major distributor such as Coop, growth on the sales front also brings logistical challenges in reverse logistics. These include the processing of returns such as empties, packaging, waste, rejects, and other materials. In the interests of sustainability and resource conservation, these returns are ideally recycled as recyclable materials and sent for reuse. The future belongs to the circular economy.

In the Coop sales region of Bern, the volume of recyclable materials has increased massively in recent years, pushing the empty container center located at the Coop distribution center in Bern-Brünnen to its capacity limits. With the existing infrastructure, it was almost impossible to cope with the increasing return volumes. It was clear to the logistics and operations managers at the Coop distribution center that something had to be done.

# RENOVATION EMPTY CONTAINER CENTER COOP DISTRIBUTION CENTER BERN

BUILDING IN  
**ONGOING PRODUCTION**  
IN ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES

*«Despite the limited space available on the site, IE Food's logistical expertise and flexible planning enabled maximum renewal in empty container logistics – a committed and professional partner for our project.»*

*Martin Aebi,  
Head of Coop Distribution Center Bern-Brünnen*



# SUCCESS FACTORS

## 1 PROJECT LAUNCH WITH PRELIMINARY STUDIES AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES.

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The basic aim was to create more space for empty containers logistics, increase delivery and collection capacity with additional ramps, speed up truck unloading, and make the entire process more efficient and therefore more economical. Given the complex space situation on the densely built-up site, there was no easy solution: the empty container distribution center is embedded in its own building complex and directly connected to the main building of the distribution center. The site also houses other buildings that serve various purposes for the distribution center and the administration of the Bern sales region.

To get this ambitious project off the ground, Coop commissioned industrial planner IE Food to conduct preliminary studies that would identify various options using an open-minded approach. After thoroughly examining several planning options, the decision was made to pursue the approach of «expanding the empty containers distribution center toward the garage» on the existing site.

## 2 A CASTLING MOVE AS THE KEY TO THE SOLUTION.

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Working closely with Coop's operations managers, IE-Planer developed a concept that convinced the client. The idea was to demolish the old detached garage building on the north side of the existing empty container center and relocate the garage operations to a nearby workshop building. The space this freed up would make it possible to add an extension to the empty container center building. The second focus of the project was to completely renovate the existing empty container center, freeing it from its historically developed small-scale structures and merging it with the new extension to form a functional unit. This castling move established the rough concept for the realization of the project.

Combining old and new was also an architectural challenge for the IE planners. What was needed was a concept in which the extension, as the dominant architectural feature, would give the new building ensemble a distinctive appearance.

## 3 WELL-THOUGHT-OUT COEXISTENCE OF DIFFERENT PROCESSES.

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With particular attention to the interface between the existing building and the new construction, the IE planners worked with those responsible for operations, to develop an optimal process layout for the integration and sensible design of the various material flows. The planning challenge here was to take into account the different properties of the delivered goods, such as folding boxes, cardboard, PET and plastic film, glass, waste, biomass, and other recyclable materials. After sorting, some of these must be processed and then transported separately to the temporary storage areas.

## 4 RENEWAL OF EQUIPMENT AND PARTIAL AUTOMATION.

The client took the renovation and new construction of the empty container center as an opportunity to renew the operating facilities and - in line with IE Food's proposal - automate sub-processes as much as possible. Existing equipment was overhauled and partially replaced with new purchases. The decommissioning and refurbishment of older equipment and the commissioning of the renewed equipment were carried out in precisely coordinated stages.

## 5 NO INTERRUPTIONS TO ONGOING OPERATIONS.

The client's clear requirement was that the renovation and new construction of the building infrastructure had to be carried out while business continued as usual. This also applied to peak periods such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, when returns of materials regularly skyrocket. Thanks to a well-thought-out phasing of the interlocking sub-projects, the processing of returns continued practically without disruption during the construction period. Once business operations had been relocated to the completed extension, the comprehensive renovation of the existing building could be carried out. This also included the renewal of the building services systems.

## 6 AN INDUSTRIAL BUILDING WITH CHARACTER AND CHARM.

The architecture of the new extension impressively demonstrates how functionality can be implemented in an aesthetically appealing and surprising way. With its bright facade, enlivened by light and shadow effects, and its visual lightness, the «backpack» in front seems to float. With its distinctive appearance, the newly built empty containers distribution center reflects Coop's image as a forward-looking company that attaches high priority to the sustainable use of resources.



**2019**

› Development of preliminary studies

**2020**

› Start of construction and operations planning

**APRIL 2021**

› Start of construction

**AUGUST 2024**

› Completion



~ 5 200 m<sup>2</sup>

› Floor space of new building

~ 4 900 m<sup>2</sup>

› Floor space of the reconstruction



**SERVICES IE FOOD**

› Project management as general planner  
› Preliminary studies, concept studies, construction project, tenders, and execution



# IE FOOD

The specialist for industrial buildings.

## We are the IE Group: your specialist for industrial buildings.

We plan, design, and construct industrial buildings. Our goal is to maximize the efficiency of your production with industrial buildings that are perfectly tailored to your manufacturing processes. We work in manageable and therefore effective teams of industry experts whose motivation and initiative you can rely on. Because at our company, all employees are involved in the business. Of course, we also give you guarantees on costs, deadlines, and quality. **IE Plast, IE Food, IE Life Science** and **IE Technology** are part of the IE Group, which has been in the market since 1966 and offers the necessary financial backing - even for large construction projects.



AT HOME IN YOUR INDUSTRY



ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING AND ACTION



ALL EXPERTS UNDER ONE ROOF



SECURITY THROUGH GUARANTEES

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