



THE LARGEST EUROPEAN
INLAND WATERWAYS NETWORK



EEIG Seine-Scheldt
2019 PROGRESS REPORT

A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK TO DEVELOP THE INLAND WATERWAY



EDITORIAL

MAJOR STEPS TAKEN IN 2019 TO BUILD A MULTIMODAL NETWORK

The dedication of the many partners and stakeholders of the European Seine-Scheldt waterway network was ramped up in 2019 at the regional, national and European level. The significant progress made by the Seine-Nord Europe Canal studies regarding the selection of project managers for the geographical sectors and locks between Noyon and Aubencheul au Bac, the work done to re-open the canal from Condé to Pommeroeul, the preparatory work to increase the gauge of the Lys Mitoyenne, the continuation of the work on the Tournai Crossing, the modernisation of the locks of the Dunkerque-Scheldt network, the start of the modernisation work on the Seine locks are major milestones which have been achieved thanks to the financial commitment of the European Union, the member states and the local and regional authorities. Since the signing of the implementing decision by the European Union on 27 June 2019 with the commitment to support the completion of the Seine-Scheldt network by 2030, the key economic players have now ramped up their efforts to prepare and appropriate the Seine-Scheldt network pending the opening of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal. The mobility solutions framework law passed in France on 24 December 2019 gives the waterway sector new and broader foundations, on which to develop a modern and efficient logistics offer, over the next few years.

AN INDUSTRIAL ACCELERATOR FOR EUROPEAN COMPANIES

By establishing in France an inter-ministerial logistics committee decided by the Prime Minister, the economic players of the various strategic sector-based committees of the French industry council ("CNI") will have the opportunity to define more accurately their expectations along the Seine-Scheldt network. For the 40 million European citizens of the six French and Belgian regions (Normandy, Île-de-France, Hauts-de-France, Grand Est, Flanders and Wallonia) and

the three European agglomerations of Paris, Lille and Brussels, there are many expected repercussions on the economic, environmental and social level. By bringing the production and consumption zones of the various industrial sectors closer together and by providing opportunities for industrial and logistical installations on the waterside, the Seine-Scheldt network is an industrial accelerator for the European companies using the waterway. The latter include the construction, agro-industry, wood, chemicals, recycling, mass distribution and naval and maritime sectors. For several years now, the agents of the Seine-Scheldt project have been conducting co-construction projects with these sectors and the local authorities, placing a high priority on pooling highly effective long-term economic solutions in every domain (port facilities, boats, logistics tools, etc) with the aim of developing their activity by taking advantage of the available potential along the network

THE CATALYST OF A MULTIMODAL LOGISTICS POLICY

Expanding the Seine-Scheldt inland port network requires increased cooperation to guarantee an efficient and economical point-to-point integrated multimodal offer. This must be accomplished between the different sectors of the network (North and Seine route) first of all and then between the different modes of transport: inland waterway/road to guarantee point-to-point deliveries to businesses close to the waterway; waterway/rail to offer medium-distance solutions on the European multimodal corridors and accessibility

**EXPANDING THE SEINE-SCHELD
INLAND PORT NETWORK
REQUIRES INCREASED
COOPERATION TO GUARANTEE
AN EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICAL
POINT-TO-POINT INTEGRATED
MULTIMODAL OFFER.**

to the major seaports. The action plans defined in 2019 - in France, for example - when the inter-port and logistics coordination councils for the Nord and Seine routes were being established, as well as the actions taken by the manufacturers to make their logistics more competitive (a sector which represents more than 10% of the French gross domestic product) provide the basis for a strong development of the waterway sector and the logistics offer in the next ten years, given that the challenge is to be ready for the full-scale opening of the Seine-Scheldt network in 2030. During this period, the needs of the major project sites (construction of the Grand Paris Express and the Seine-Nord Europe Canal, preparation for the 2024 Olympic Games) will also make it possible to transform the waterway transport offer into an integrated transport system at the service of multimodal and carbon-free logistics. Digitisation, automation and data sharing will be catalysts for establishing new benchmarks. Thanks to its scope and the number of its stakeholders, the project also paves the way for the pooling and expansion of multimodal innovations, by promoting the spread of standardised solutions and by offering a critical size for the experimentation and deployment of projects in particular.

**BY GETTING THE AGENTS
ON BOARD AND GETTING
THEM INVOLVED, THEY
HAVE TAKEN ON A NEW
DIMENSION AND GIVEN US
THE MEANS TO INNOVATE
TOGETHER ON
A LONG-TERM BASIS.**

A UNIFYING PROJECT OF PARTNERSHIPS AND ADDED VALUE FOR EUROPE

As a collaborative network promoting the waterway, Seine-Scheldt has given rise to numerous alliances at every level of the different regions. International, national, interregional, regional and local alliances have a pooling effect, bringing together the following agents: states, communi-

ties, key economic players, associations, experts, citizens, etc. Faced with the economic, social and environmental challenges, the project helps to generate multiple forms of collective work and joint initiatives, such as the inter-port coordination on the Nord route and the Seine route, new ideas on logistics, public-private partnerships, cross-sector pooled investment, coordination between ports and modes of transport, cross-border structural projects.

A EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR INNOVATING TOGETHER IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

All in all, the Seine-Scheldt network is a great accelerator of progress for public policies and European citizens. We noticed this during the Smart Rivers 2019 (Lyon) and Riverdating (Liège) international events: whether it is designing the boat of the future or planning tomorrow's jobs for managing waterway transport, consolidating logistics flows, developing a connected network of inland ports, developing renewable energies and dockside energy storage systems, creating international connections for the industries of the regions, promoting industrial and logistics investment on the waterway, helping to reduce the effects of transport on the climate or even developing new landscapes and new urban and rural links, the Seine-Scheldt project offers an exceptional "playing field" for designing and implementing new solutions. By getting the agents on board and getting them involved, they have taken on a new dimension and given the new team of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG the means to innovate together on a long-term basis.

Nicolas BOUR

*Manager of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG
& Voies navigables de France
delegate for industrial and international affairs*

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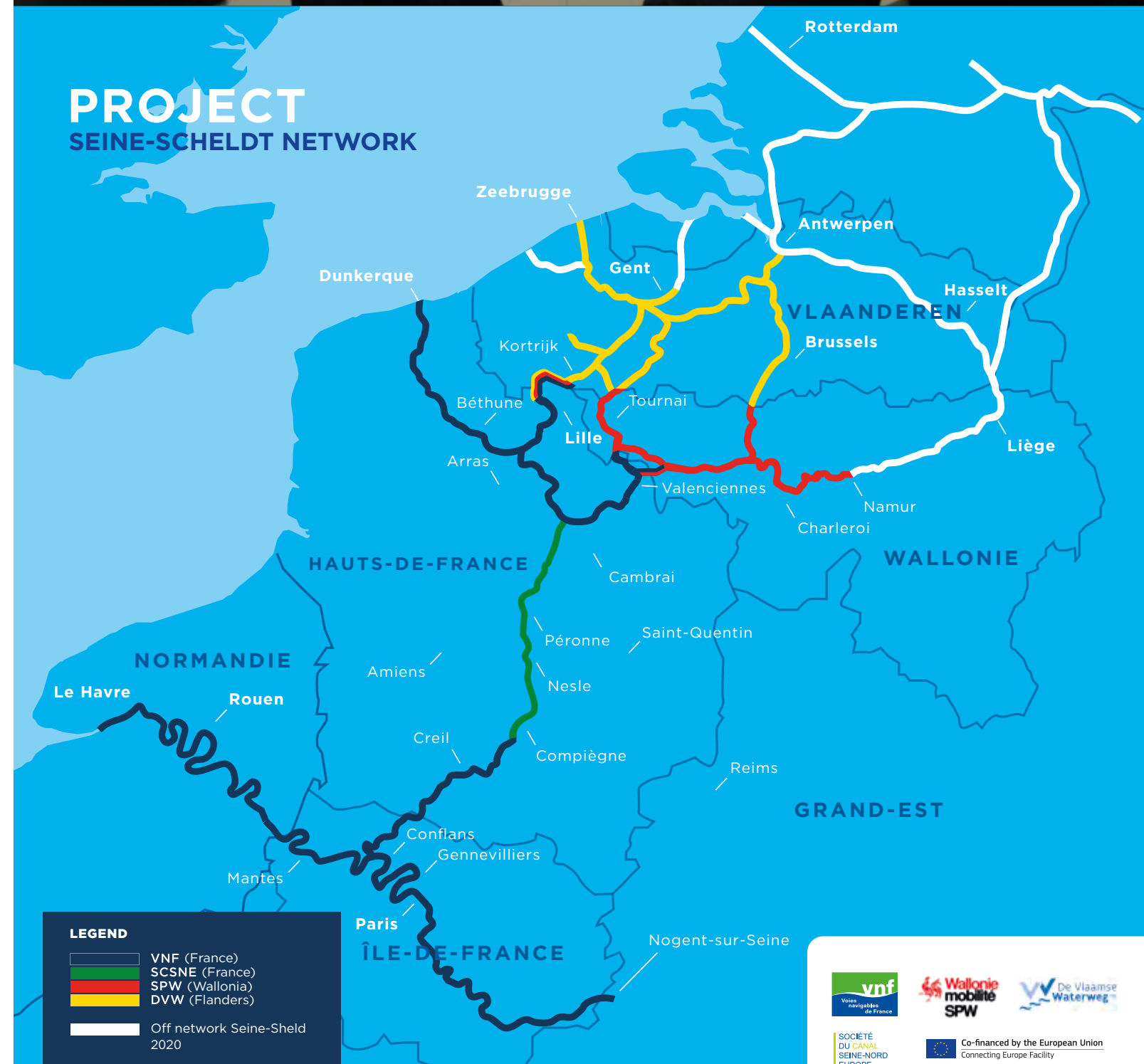
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Meeting of the strategic committee of the Société du Canal Seine Nord Europe in Nesles
in the presence of the President of France on 22 November 2019 © AP SCSNE



CHAP. 1

2019, A YEAR OF DECISIONS AND COMMITMENTS FOR THE KEY ECONOMIC PLAYERS

Marked by some important decisions and progress made at an international, national and regional level, 2019 will remain a pivotal year in the history of the Seine-Scheldt network. During this period, this exceptional project succeeded in enhancing the waterway as a driver of long-term progress for the key economic players and European citizens, consolidating its character as a collaborative project and starting to achieve its objectives by anticipating the future.

Smart Rivers Lyon octobre 2019 © VNF Damien Lachas



1. FROM THE EUROPEAN IMPLEMENTING DECISION TO THE MOBILITY SOLUTIONS FRAMEWORK LAW (“LOM”)

NEW FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

During 2019, there were a series of events that will build the history of the financing of the Seine-Scheldt waterway network. On 27 June, the European Commission issued an Implementing Decision. It confirmed the high priority of the project, specified the timetable and the roadmap, and confirmed its long-term backing for the project until the completion of the TEN-T core network in 2030.

The amendment no. 3 to the Grant Agreement implemented as part of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) was also signed during the year. This amendment affects the European funding (50% of the cost of the studies and 40% of the cost of the works) until end 2022, and no longer until 2020 as initially planned. In addition, it revises the investment budget allocated to VNF upwards: the Establishment saw its resources grow by 50%, a historic increase enshrined in the mobility solutions framework law passed on 24 December 2019 which will allow it to carry out the major network regeneration and modernisation projects in the next ten years. Other significant event: the French Government, the Hauts-de-France and Île-de-France regions, the départements of the Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme and Oise have concluded an agreement for the funding of the Seine-Nord Europe canal. It stip-

ulates that a state budget contribution of €1.1 billion will be paid to the SCSNE by the French Transport Infrastructure Financing Agency. The local and regional authorities are also making a budget contribution of €1.1 billion and will guarantee the loan which will be raised at the end of the construction period for nearly €900m. This financing plan includes a contribution from the European Union of up to 40% of the cost of the works, i.e. €2 billion. This contribution could increase to 50% from 2023, given the new regulation of the Connecting Europe Facility.

The real “shareholders’ agreement” was formally recognised by the President of the French Republic, Monsieur Emmanuel Macron, during a visit to Amiens on 22 November 2019, during which he participated in the meeting of the Seine-Nord Europe strategic committee, three days after the mobility solutions framework law was passed by the French National Assembly. This entrusts the governance of the SCSNE to the local authorities from 2020, given that the state is still a member of the supervisory board, and confirms the scheduling and national funding of the other major French projects in the Seine-Scheldt network, such as the large-gauge upgrade of the Bray-Nogent link in the Seine basin and the upgrade to the European Vb gauge of the Oise between Compiègne and Creil (Magéo project).



ÉTIENNE WILLAME

MANAGING DIRECTOR (SPW) MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURES

“After many years of effort, the Seine-Scheldt network took major steps forward in 2019. This confirms the choices we made, allows us to mobilise additional resources to modernise the waterway network with an upgrade to the large gauge, and fulfils the expectations of all its stakeholders. We are now at a point of no-return. A new era is beginning, during which we will be able to plan new investments and conclude the project on the basis of the roadmap given to us by the European Commission in its Implementing Decision. I am convinced that the way in which we tackled the cooperation aspects of the network and forged strong ties within the Seine-Scheldt EEIG is the right formula for completing a project like this one. Increasingly involved on the ground during major events like Riverdating, we feel that this project creates some momentum, leading to a certain enthusiasm to open discussions and build greater collaboration”.



MARC PAPINUTTI

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND
THE SEA (DGITM), MINISTRY OF ECOLOGICAL AND INCLUSIVE TRANSITION (MTES)

“With the agreement signed between the state and the local authorities of the Hauts-de-France, which sets the conditions for concluding the construction of the Seine Nord Europe canal, and the mobility solutions framework law which will transform the canal company into a local public establishment on 1 April 2020, the ‘missing link’ project, which is key to completing the Seine-Scheldt network, can be part of a long-term plan with a clear governance and funding that is defined, for the very first time. This is also the case for the project as a whole, with the European Commission’s Implementing Decision.

These events represent a turning point, while also being in keeping with what we said in 2017, when we mentioned the need to secure the conditions for the completion of the project.”



Meeting of the strategic committee of the Société du Canal Seine Nord Europe in Nesles in the presence of the President of France on 22 November 2019 © AP SCSNE



Riverdating Liège November 2019 © VNF Didier Gauducheau



Signing of the financing agreement by the President of the Hauts-de-France Region 22.11.19 © AP SCSNE

ENHANCED COLLECTIVE MANAGEMENT

The financial commitments made in 2019 have accelerated the collaborative efforts surrounding the Seine-Scheldt network. The co-management of the project bears witness to this. Given the cross-border nature of the project that requires good coordination between the countries and regions concerned, two specific governance structures were put in place in 2009: an intergovernmental commission and an EEIG grouping made up of VNF, SPW, DVW and, since 2018, the SCSNE. The members of these bodies meet regularly (quarterly for the commission, monthly for the EEIG) and exchange information on a regular basis. Over time, a collective has been created. It was consolidated even further in 2019 with the work carried out prior to the conclusion of amendment no. 3 to the Grant Agreement and the preparation of the Implementing Decision of the European Commission in particular.

A EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION CONCERNED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WATERWAY

The highlight of the involvement of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG during the year was undoubtedly its participation in the "Smart Rivers 2019" organisation, the world conference on waterways, which was held for the first time in France in Lyon from 30 September to 3 October. The conference, which gathered together 400 participants from 34 countries and resulted in 160 communications, was a unique opportunity to highlight the European and international collaboration around the development of the inland waterways. The EEIG Seine-Scheldt devoted 18 months of work to its preparation, while working alongside the PIANC (international association for maritime and inland waterway transport infrastructures). It was particularly involved in the international organising committee responsible for setting up a university task force around the following three formative topics for waterway transport: logistics and supply chain, digitisation and robotisation and renewable energies, during numerous communications to present the strategic and technical challenges of the Seine-Scheldt network and by moderating 8 round table discussions with the key economic players.

Opening of the Smart Rivers Lyon conference October 2019 © VNF D. Lachas



THIERRY GUIMBAUD

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF VOIES NAVIGABLES DE FRANCE (VNF)

"The year 2019 saw the strategic alignment of all the agents involved in the Seine-Scheldt project. Naturally, there was the European Commission's Implementing Decision and its funding commitment, which is currently at 40% and could rise to 50% in the future. This funding of almost €2 billion is a substantial political commitment at a time when European funds are in high demand. There was also the signing of the amendment to the European financing agreement and the clarifications added to the governance and financing of the project in France by the agreement between the state and the local authorities.

Given that the mobility solutions framework law ("LOM") was passed in 2019, VNF will also benefit from a multi-annual increase in state loans for the regeneration and modernisation of the waterway network, starting with the Seine and Nord-Pas de Calais network.

For our establishment, these are key milestones because the Seine-Scheldt network represents a major commitment. By 2022, we will have invested nearly €270 million in the modernisation of the 730 km of the existing French network."



DOMINIQUE VAN HECKE

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DE VLAAMSE WATERWEG NV (DVW)

"Smart Rivers 2019 in Lyon was an excellent opportunity for DVW to demonstrate its strong commitment to developing the Seine-Scheldt network. As a result, we were able to open discussions within an international context on many topics relating to modern waterway management and the future of inland waterway navigation.

Hence our significant presence at this conference, both in terms of the number of participants and the number of speeches on the various topics addressed, e.g. digitisation or the ecological development of the waterways. We would also like to thank and congratulate the French section of the PIANC for the successful organisation of this event, which has really added value for us in terms of ideas, contacts and know-how."

AN INCREASINGLY UNIFIED EUROPEAN NETWORK WITH STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS

As you would expect, during a year characterised by multiple major international developments, the relations of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG with the European institutions has also grown more close-knit. The performance audit on the flagship transport infrastructures launched by the European Court of Auditors, for example, gave its members the chance to recall the character of the Seine-Scheldt network to accelerate the development of the six regions concerned, and respond to major European challenges beyond this zone. In accordance with the Implementing Decision, this cooperation should be even more close-knit and more substantial in the future between the six French and Belgian regions (Normandy, Île-de-France, Hauts-de-France, Grand Est, Flanders Wallonia) and the three European agglomerations of Paris, Lille and Brussels, which can only contribute further to the smooth running of the project.

The concerted implementation of the Seine-Scheldt network also reached an unprecedented level in 2019. The approach, initiated by the public authorities, has brought together various public and private agents for a number of

THE CONSULTATION CONCERNING THE PROJECT WAS ENRICHED BY THE NEW INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED DURING THE YEAR

years now. These agents also include many citizens as well as local authorities, key economic players and environmental associations. It aims to promote the construction of the network, its appropriation and the attainment of 16 objectives (see page 14-15) set in 2015 to fulfil the priorities of the European Commission. Despite already being very extensive, the consultation around the project was enriched by new initiatives during the year. In Wallonia, the launch of several public inquiries has for example enabled citizens to participate in decision-making processes. Another illustration of this enhanced consultation: by providing a broader basis for the development of a modern logistics offer, the passing of the French mobility solutions framework law has accelerated the commitment of key economic players in preparing the opening of the Seine-Nord-Europe Canal.



Environment Reliability Tourism
Canal External trade Transport
Logistic Mutualisation Multimodality



JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEGARET

REPRESENTATIVE OF REGION ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

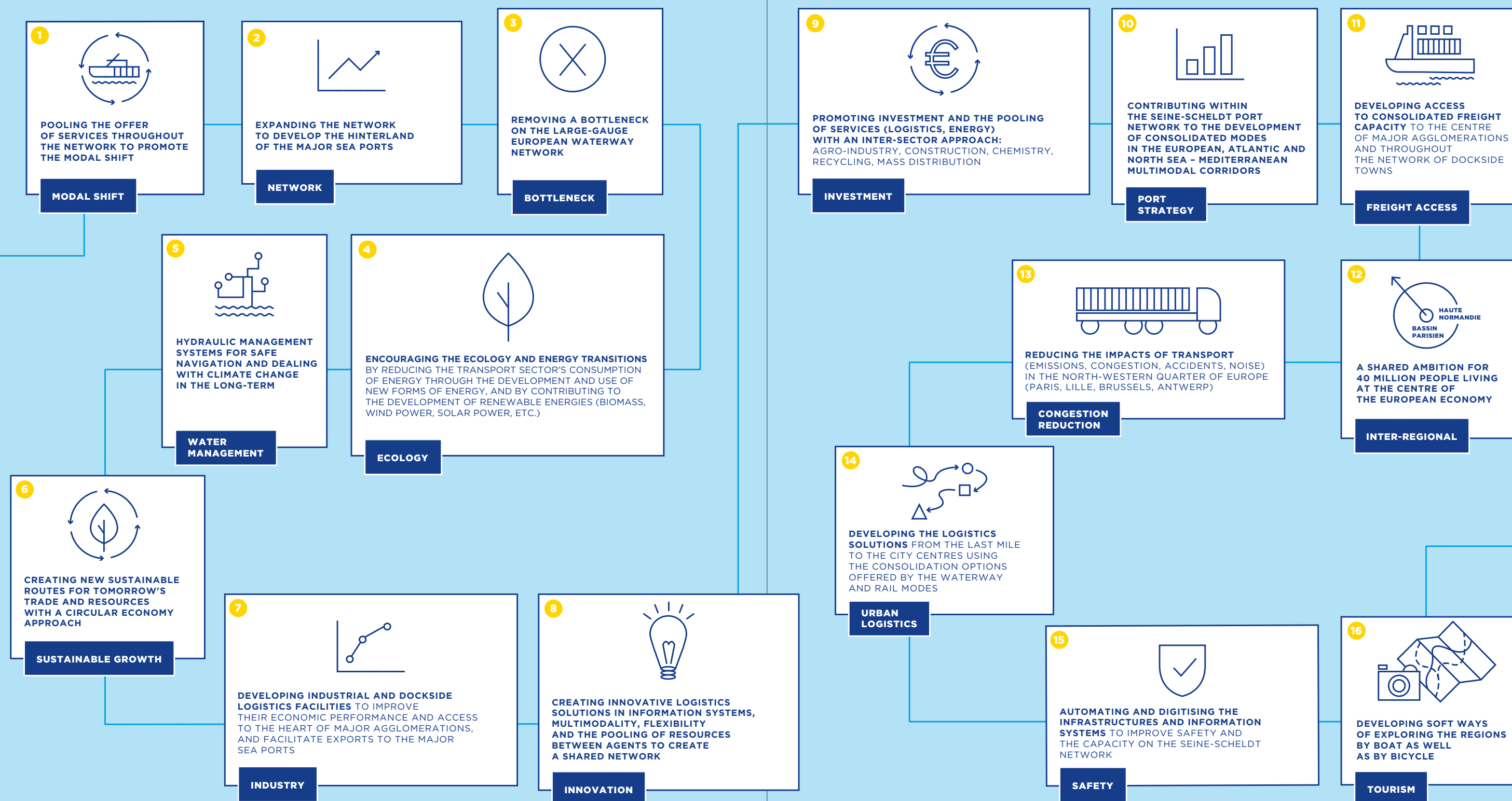
"I was in the Somme for the signing of the agreement between the state and the local authorities for the financing of the Seine-Nord Europe canal. I see this as a historic milestone for the Seine-Scheldt network, which marks the symbolic recognition of its viability as well as the start of a new era for the governance of major infrastructure projects. The Île-de-France region has decided to contribute €110 million to investments associated with the canal, even though all of the work will be completed outside its region.

This is a way of showing our commitment to what we consider to be a great European project for the future. In Île-de-France, the inland waterway is the only traffic route that is not saturated. The future canal will create opportunities for developing traffic and relieving congestion on the road and rail networks. We know that this is achievable, given that the Seine already accounts for 90% of the transport of construction materials and heavy goods in our region despite the very high level of urbanisation."

Barge loading © AIRDIASOL Rothan



THE OBJECTIVES SET IN 2015 BY THE PARTNERS OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT EEIG
ARE IMPLEMENTED IN A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH IN ORDER TO MEET THE PRIORITIES
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION.





2. INNOVATION DEDICATED TO DESIGNING A MODERN NETWORK

EXTENDED AND OPTIMISED WATERWAY INFRASTRUCTURES

So that the Seine-Scheldt network is ready to be opened to navigation in 2028, new infrastructures must be created, including the Seine-Nord Europe canal, a 107 km waterway with the European Vb gauge that will link the Oise to the Dunkerque-Scheldt Canal from Compiègne to Auchenbeul-au-Bac. The success of the project also relies on the regeneration and modernisation of the 1000 km network that already exists in France and in Belgium. There are many challenges: the reliability of the inland waterways and waterway infrastructures must be improved; adaptation to the increase in traffic and the development of increasingly large capacity boats; improvement in the quality of service; optimisation of the hydraulic management and maintenance of the area; reduction in operating costs... In the regions covered by the network, some investment programmes have therefore been put together so that the waterway infrastructures can be progressively installed in accordance with the ambitions of the project. These programmes, all of which deliver innovation and improvements to the waterway, continued in 2019 with the major advances being made as a consequence. In France, the modernisation

of the Méricourt lock on the Seine was started and the construction of the Seine-Nord-Europe canal has achieved some important milestones. These include the following: the filing, in April, of the environmental authorisation file for the southern sector, the completion of numerous technical surveys for the northern sector and, in December, the awarding of the project management contracts for the completion of the 89 km of sectors 2, 3 and 4. In Wallonia, the modernisation of the Tournai Crossing, which will be able to handle 2,000-tonne vessels up to 11.40 metres wide, is nearing completion. The first phase (removal of a quay) is complete. Phases 2 and 3 (urban development work which will last until 2020) have started and the last phase (raising the Pont des Trous after its partial deconstruction) is ahead. In Flanders, the opening of the new Harelbeke lock, the improvement of the Bossuyt-Kortrijk canal, a complex project that will create a large Va gauge connection between the Lys and the Upper Scheldt, has made progress. A public inquiry and an in-depth analysis of the three technical alternatives has been completed, paving the way for a decision by the Flemish government in 2020 and for the final preparation of the project. The year was also



CIZA-JOELLE KABANYEGEYE

DIRECTOR (SPW) OF MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURES

"For several years now, we have been integrating digital technologies into our information systems and facilities, like VNF on the other side of the border. Our objective is twofold: having the ability to control and manage our installations remotely on the one hand and developing interconnections between our different sites on the other hand. Increasingly, this involves collecting, centralising, processing and sharing data that is useful for water management, human resources, handling operations, maintenance, traffic monitoring, user information, etc.

We are currently working on developing a supervision tool which could become a benchmark standard. We have set up some topical work groups to reflect on this while keeping in mind the needs of the teams in the field. We want to establish a reference document containing all the data we need by the end of 2020. To complete the process, we have acquired a prototype for remotely controlling the Salzinnes lock, near Namur. It is currently in the testing phase and, in February 2020, we will also start testing the prototype for managing the operations of the weir beside the lock.

When these tests have been completed, we will validate the standard and then gradually deploy it on our sites, structure by structure, using integration cabinets so that the equipment can be adapted to local requirements. We are working at the same time on a decision support tool for hydraulic management. The prototype will be ready in April 2020."

fruitful for the cross-border partnership between France, Wallonia and Flanders on the following two iconic projects: the increase in the gauge of the Lys Mitoyenne on the Franco-Belgian border and the re-opening to navigation of the Condé-Pommerœul canal in the Hauts-de-France, one of the three outlets of the Seine-Scheldt corridor towards large-gauge waterway networks of northern Europe. At the end of 2019, Thierry Guimbaud and Etienne Willame, the managing directors of VNF and SPW, also went together to the Condé-Pommerœul canal site to observe the progress of the work.

DIGITISATION AT THE HEART OF THE PROJECT

Given its scale, its ambitions and the many different skills it brings to bear, the Seine-

Scheldt network is a fantastic domain for innovation. Digitisation, in particular, is central to the implementation of the project. Along with the management of infrastructures, facilities, freight, fleets, navigation, etc. the digital revolution will transform the entire value chain of the waterway transport sector, making it more responsive, efficient, reliable and fluid, thereby helping to reduce costs and foster the development of models. To achieve their objectives, the agents of the Seine-Scheldt network want to capitalise on these transformations. There are many issues that need to be explored, such as putting together and using shared databases, the modelling and remote control systems of installations, the automation of facilities, the growth of predictive maintenance, the development of applications to improve logistical processes and waterway information, autonomous boats, Internet of Things, etc. Some are already fully inte-

grated into the Seine-Scheldt project. This is the case for the remote control systems of the waterway installations and the development of an integrated, digital cross-border traffic management system. Others are gaining momentum in the work completed and the initiatives put in place. Consequently, in Belgium, the digitisation of inland navigation is at the heart of DVW's Smart Shipping scheme which includes several pilot projects on autonomous navigation and logistical innovation.

THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT ALSO RELIES ON THE REGENERATION AND MODERNISATION OF THE 1000 KM NETWORK THAT ALREADY EXISTS

3 - A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

A NETWORK THAT FORGES LINKS AND CREATES VALUE

The Seine-Scheldt project is crucial for mobility and trade in Europe because it will link the Seine basin to that of the Scheldt and to other large waterway basins like those of the Rhine and the Meuse. In this way, it will create a high-capacity waterway network connecting the inland and maritime ports of this vast cross-border area. This network will double the capacity for trade and logistics development in the areas covered. The project has another benefit for mobility, since it has been identified as a the key intermodal project of the European North Sea Mediterranean multimodal corridor and will occupy a central place in the multimodal policy with the other European corridors (Atlantic, Mediterranean, Rhine-Alps and North-Baltic Sea). By connecting regions and populations, by connecting production and consumption areas, as well as urban, industrial, logistics and commercial hubs, the Seine-Scheldt network will be a real driver for local, national and international development.

It will be reflected in the creation of an ecosystem around the inland waterways that offers multiple opportunities for the creation of wealth and jobs, improving the quality of life and generating sustainable innovations. As a consequence, the 200 cities with populations in excess of 20,000 located near the network will benefit from access to congestion-free trading of goods and commodities, a gateway towards Europe, renewed competitiveness in terms of exports as well as the benefits of the waterway associated with regional planning, tourism and recreational activities.

AN ACCELERATOR OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The first to see the appeal of the Seine-Scheldt project has been the economical players of various fields of industry. By creating a continuous process that enhances the maritime and inland ports and the waterfront facilities, the network will make the waterway mode more accessible, competitive and efficient. It is therefore a growth driver for companies in the sectors using the waterway: businesses in construction and public works as well as the wood, steel, automotive, agro-industry, chemicals, circular economy, mass distribution sectors, etc. For several years now, the waterway transport agents have been working closely with these sectors to co-construct solutions for integrating the waterway in the logistics value chains and to promote the creation of a real "industrial corridor" along the Seine-Scheldt infrastructures.

Consultations, conducted within the framework of the sector strategic committees of the National Industry Council ("CNI") in particular, have defined the specific needs of each sector. Initiatives are then launched in the regions to fulfil these needs. They aim, for example, to pool the handling and storage facilities, equip the port areas with new multimodal infrastructures, offer innovative services such as digital navigation aid services and think up new uses for waterway transport, such as urban distribution systems. With the creation in France of an inter-ministerial logistics committee, announced for early 2020 by the Prime Minister, manufacturers will be able to define their expectations in greater detail.



CHRIS DANCKAERTS

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DE VLAAMSE WATERWEG NV (DVW)

"The 2019 outcome for the Seine-Scheldt network is remarkable. It was a very positive year, marked by some significant progress internationally such as the amendment no. 3 to the Grant Agreement and the Implementing Decision, as well as the advances made for our region with, for example, the completion of our Harelbeke lock keeper complex. The awareness of the project is increasing and the support from both our stakeholders and the general public in Flanders, is growing. This is also thanks to the active and very real communication policy that we have been deploying for years. The creation of the Seine-Scheldt network is seen as an important priority for driving the modal shift towards the inland waterway. It will contribute to the sustainable development of freight transport, reducing congestion and the fight against global warming. This puts it at the heart of our mobility policy, as is demonstrated by the inclusion of the project in the coalition agreement of the new Flemish government."



Opening of the Harelbeke lock © De Vlaamse Waterweg NV



ALAIN LEFEBVRE

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF PORTS DE LILLE

"Given its strengths, including its integration within a European corridor, the many possibilities offered by its gauge and the advantages of the inland waterway transport mode for companies that are increasingly concerned with social and environmental responsibility, the Seine-Scheldt network will boost activity along the waterway.

It will, for example, make the agricultural production areas more accessible to the ports of Lille, which work a lot with the food industry. It also opens up prospects for developing the circular economy, giving the Hauts-de-France region opportunities to supply other regions, starting with Île-de-France, with recycled materials and products. But as long as the Seine-Nord Europe canal is not finished, the network is not powerful. To ensure that it becomes more than just a transit route, the land along the waterway will have to be managed properly. Great care will be needed when choosing the sectors and businesses that will set up dockside operations, giving priority to those with an interest in promoting a multimodal approach. The management of the economic development will also have to take into account consumption zones, relying on increased trade and collaboration between the ports and getting the manufacturers located far upstream involved."

INDUSTRIAL SECTORS WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

The year 2019 has demonstrated the growing involvement of industrial sectors in the implementation of the Seine-Scheldt transport system. On 13 February, the strategic sector contract of the “Industries for Construction” was signed by the French State (represented by François de Rugy, Minister for the Ecological and Solidarity Transition, Julien Denormandie, Minister to the Minister of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities, in charge of Cities and Housing, and Agnes Pannier-Runacher, Secretary of State to the Minister of Economy and Finance), the Association of Mayors of France and the French association of construction product industries (“AIMCC”), which represented the economic players of the construction sector (materials, roads, public works, building, wood, steel). It includes the Multiregio Project, a new waterway logistics offer whose operation geographical area corresponds to the entire Seine-Scheldt network and its intermediate-gauge capillary network. Multiregio

– “A waterway route for the circular economy” – is a new complementary approach to the current waterway transport system that is the preferred option of many economic players who are looking for intermediate capacity units backed by several sectors of the French national council of industry (“CNI”). It is based on the construction of modular units (self-propelled and non-motorised barges) each with a capacity of 500 T, intended to operate in simple or multi-batch convoys (of two, four or six units) and without transshipment between the large-gauge and intermediate-gauge routes (Canal du Nord, Aisne, Marne).

Following this Strategic Contract and a protocol signed in 2012 by 40 upstream and downstream sectors of the agricultural sector, a protocol was signed on 6 May 2019 between VNF, AIMCC, Intercéréales (the interprofessional representative for the production, marketing and primary processing of cereals) and GICAN (the grouping of

naval construction industries and activities). The signatories agreed to implement the Multiregio pilot project as part of a pooled investment approach between industry shippers in these two sectors in response to the call for projects issued at the end of 2018 by BPI France (Banque Publique d’Investissement). As a result, companies operating in different sectors will be able to co-construct this solution. Together and with the help of BPI France, they plan to create two companies – one dedicated to research and innovation around the project, the other to leasing barges – and to develop a global shared logistics offer on the perimeter of the Seine-Scheldt, that will include waterway towing, handling, storage and pre- and post-shipments. If the experiment is successful, this approach could become a benchmark for the waterway sector in France or even in Europe, where many shippers have expressed an interest.

NEW COOPERATIVE ACTIONS SERVING A MULTIMODAL LOGISTICS POLICY

Attaining the industrial development objectives of the Seine-Scheldt network means providing a high-performance point-to-point multimodal offer that integrates all the regions covered and every transport mode: the rivers and roads for short-distance deliveries, but also the rivers and railways for medium-distance transport and shipments to the major seaports. In this way the project acts like a catalyst for a multimodal logistics policy, by creating new forms of cooperation. In the Hauts-de-France, for example, an inter-port and logistics coordination council for the Nord route has been set up to speed up the ecological, energy and digital transitions and make the logistics system in north

west Europe more competitive. Chaired by the regional prefect, the council is made up of public and private decision-makers: seaports of Boulogne, Calais, Dunkerque and Eurotunnel, the regional CCI, the Norlink federation, road infrastructure managers (DIR Nord, SANEF), waterway infrastructure managers (VNF and SCSNE), railway infrastructure managers (SNCF), the Regional Council, the communities of agglomerations of the Boulonnais, Calais and Dunkerque and the Métropole Européenne de Lille. Its action plan for 2020-2025 aims to improve the complementary aspects of the modes of transport of goods on the Nord route and prepare for the arrival of

the Seine-Nord Europe canal. The construction site of the Canal, as well as those of the Grand Paris Express and the 2024 Olympic Games, will give waterway stakeholders – and not only those of the Nord route – a great playing field on which to transform their transport and logistics offer into an integrated system and be ready as soon as the Seine-Scheldt network opens in 2030.



HUGUES VÉRITÉ

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT INDUSTRIES (“AIMCC”)

“The Seine-Scheldt network is strategic because it is located in ‘the blue banana’, a highly populated and urbanised European megalopolis. It is also at the centre of the flow of goods coming from and going out to the whole world from Le Havre to Dunkerque and Antwerp, because certain ports of international interest are upstream, while the export processing industries are downstream. That said, this network is appealing in three ways, between the activities coming from Greater Paris, the Seine-Nord Canal project and the exporters located along the way. More broadly, it contributes to the competitiveness of the waterway route, the Multiregio project and the appeal of the sectors within the National Industry Council (“CNI”).”



**IN THIS WAY
THE PROJECT ACTS
LIKE A CATALYST
FOR A MULTIMODAL
LOGISTICS POLICY**

Dunkerque-Scheldt Canal © APB

4 - REGIONAL CONSULTATION AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

REGIONAL CONSULTATION, THE KEY TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

Faced with the economic and ecological challenges shared by all of the stakeholders, the following agents on the ground must work together in both urban and rural areas if there is to be any chance of building the Seine-Scheldt network: mayors, citizens, farmers, associations, etc. For almost 20 years, the continuous actions of the members of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG have borne fruit in this area, with not only a very high level of acceptance, but also a commitment to a co-construction approach.

An illustration of this can be found in Wallonia, where the Tournai Crossing - and the crossing of the Pont des Trous in particular - was one of the main bottlenecks in this part of the Seine-Scheldt network. The year 2019 saw the conclusion of many years of discussions with elected officials and the residents of the town, with an agreement on the partial deconstruction and reconstruction of the bridge while respecting the local heritage.

For its part, the SCSNE, while starting the regionalisation process, has finalised the partnership agreements with the French local authorities around the "Grand Chantier" (major project) approach deployed as part of the construction of the canal. The first "Canal solidaire" agreement, pertaining to integration, was signed with the presidents of the six départements of Nord, Oise, Pas de Calais, Somme, Aisne and Val d'Oise and the president of the Hauts-de-France region. At the same time, two new agreements, "Canal Emploi" (canal employment) and "Canal Entreprises" (canal businesses) have been prepared which should be signed later in 2020.



Consultation on the Flemish works © De Vlaamse Waterweg NV



THE SEINE-SCHELDT
NETWORK IS
AT THE SERVICE
OF THE ECOLOGICAL
TRANSITION

Smart Logistics Flash event - Smart Rivers Lyon October 2019 © VNF D. Lachas

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

As the international community shows increasing concern over climate change and its consequences, the Seine-Scheldt network is at the service of the ecological transition. By encouraging an ambitious transfer from the road to the waterway for shipments in urban areas as well as for those destined for the seaports, it meets the European objective of decarbonising transport and the expectations of key economic players that are increasingly concerned with social responsibility. In addition to the modal shift, the Seine-Scheldt project integrated environmental objectives from the very start with processes aimed at protecting biodiversity, making the engines of the fleets greener or even developing renewable energies on the waterfront. These steps are making progress in the regions, as the advances in 2019 have shown. In Flanders, for example, the new weirs of Kerkhove on Upper Scheldt and Harelbeke on the Lys, built as part of the modernisation of the Flemish waterway network, were both equipped with fish passes to facilitate fish migration. Over 2,000 trees and shrubs were also planted in Lievegem and a hydroelectric turbine was built in Harelbeke.



BRAM TACK
LEIEDAL COORDINATOR

"Seine-Scheldt is an ambitious project with a significant environmental impact. This means that, in the years to come, the profile and operational activities of our region will change radically. In this regard, it is of utmost importance that Seine-Scheldt is not seen simply as an infrastructure project but as a project for the region. In other words, it must be a project that fulfils local and regional ambitions, while also creating environmental quality at every level. Besides the mobility and transport issues, it takes into account the restoration of the waterways. In a region where the availability of green and natural spaces is limited, carrying out this type of development work, in synergy with the agriculture and leisure sectors, creates added value. By definition, the waterways play a key role in linking up the blue and green spaces. The course of the Lys in Kortrijk is a magnificent example of this. In this specific case, Seine-Scheldt is what sparked a very fine example of urban renewal."



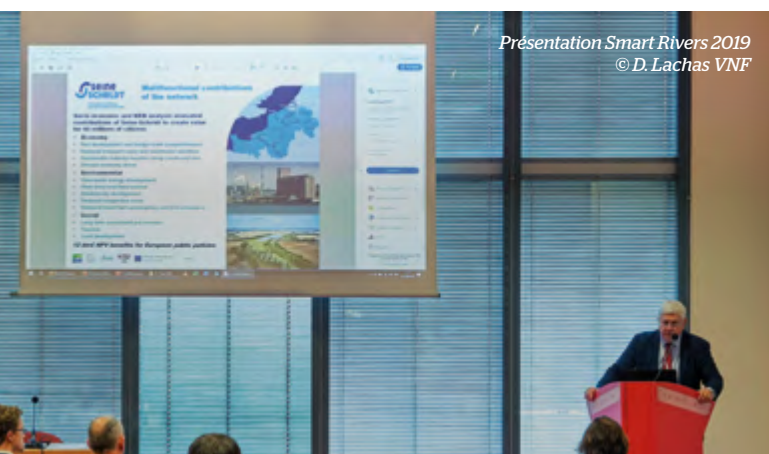
LIEVEN DEJONCKHEERE
DIVISION HEAD WESTERN REGION DE VLAAMSE WATERWEG NV

"DVW is fully in favour of organising a consultation that is as wide-reaching and participatory as possible on the subject of the Seine-Scheldt network. To this end, we are deploying an active and long-term communication policy, using traditional media such as newsletters, as well as new tools such as online platforms. These communications, which are aimed at all stakeholders, clearly increase the exposure of the project and helps to build public support, which is essential for a programme of this magnitude. The consultation is also organised in a more formal manner. For each major element of the project, such as the Lys route or the crossing of Bruges, an advisory group of experts and stakeholders has been set up as a result. This group meets regularly so that the stakeholders can exchange their views. The public inquiries launched during each environmental impact study or building permit application also provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the decision-making process. This was the case in 2019 for the inquiries conducted on the Ooigem bridge or the Bossuyt-Kortrijk canal."



SMART RIVERS AND RIVERDATING, TWO OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

To promote the advancement of the Seine-Scheldt network and make it easier for all the stakeholders to take ownership of it, its agents are developing the communication on the project. In 2019, this communication was particularly active internationally at a number of events. Consequently, the Seine-Scheldt link was part of the Riverdating programme, which is a gathering of the European agents of the waterway transport and multi-modal logistics sectors. The 12th Riverdating event was held on 27 and 28 November at the Palais des Congrès in Liège, Belgium.



Présentation Smart Rivers 2019
© D. Lachas VNF

The Seine-Scheldt EEIG, co-organiser of the 2019 Smart Rivers conference in Lyon, coordinated a series of eight *Flash Events* with VNF and the CNR to highlight certain innovative initiatives and compare points of view on various subjects. The *Smart Logistics Flash Event* was on smart logistics issues in the waterway sector. The *Smart Data Management Flash Event*, on data management applications for designing and operating installations. The *Smarts Cities Flash Event*, on innovative solutions for creating logistical systems within cities from or to ports. The Smart Shipping Flash Event, on autonomous boats and smart navigation. The *Smart Tourism Flash Event*, on the co-construction of the tourist offer between

the agents and the contribution of the waterway to sustainable tourism. The *Smart Energy Flash Event*, on the energy transition in the waterway sector. The *Smart Water Management Flash Event*, on the smart water management using new technologies. As for the Smart Circular Economy Flash Event, it was devoted to the use of the waterway for the circular economy.

SEINE-SCHELDT, A CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACCELERATOR

Like the other *Flash Events of Smart Rivers 2019*, the circular economy featured significantly in the discussions on the future of the waterways. The speakers showed how the waterway transport mode, a consolidated shipment solution with a naturally pendular motion, was a means of developing the collection and recovery of waste, thus saving material resources. Among the projects presented was an initiative from Lille City Council: the latter decided to use the inland routes to transport waste between Halluin and Sequedin, two municipalities that are 38 km apart. Two barges are constantly travelling from one to the other, transporting organic waste in one direction and household waste in the other, to the respective treatment sites. If implemented across the Seine-Scheldt network, the transport of waste would considerably increase the recycling capacities of various industrial sectors. The change for those involved in the circular economy is the industrial competitiveness that the waterway would contribute throughout a 1,100 km European inland waterway network, and the expansion of this strategic market to a unique pool of more than 40 million European citizens, making it possible to increase the size of the reprocessing units.



CHRISTOPHE VANMUYSEN

INSPECTOR GENERAL (SPW) OF MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURES

"After seven years of discussion and consultation, through referenda and citizen workshops, we obtained authorisation in 2019 to partially deconstruct the Pont des Trous in Tournai in order to widen the central arch. This is an important symbolic step because it is a listed medieval construction to which the population is very attached. It is also the last bottleneck to be removed for the crossing of the city: as it stands, standardised class Va barges cannot pass through the central arch.

We will rebuild the bridge to increase the navigable gauge to reach a width of 12.5 m and a vertical clearance of 7 m under the central arch. All this will be done while respecting the historical heritage requirements and the character of the building. We will reuse as many of the stones from the deconstruction as possible. The remaining stones needed for the new construction will come from Gore quarry which is managed by the SPW. The construction site will also be particularly ecological, giving priority to alternative modes of transport in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."



JÉRÔME DEZOBRY

(SCSNE) CHAIRMAN OF THE SCSNE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

"The regionalisation of the SCSNE clarifies the roles in the completion of the Seine-Nord Europe canal: the state retains its sovereign role and gives the communities on the front line the leadership to conduct the works, in full responsibility. It's a new way of carrying out a major project, in line with what the Seine-Scheldt network is all about: before being an infrastructure project, it was first and foremost a planning and economic development project, which also provides a solution to an environmental problem. We make progress by maintaining the closest possible ties at grassroots level so that we are in keeping with the real-life situation locally. This involves an ongoing consultation process that advances one step at a time and relies heavily on the collective intelligence of the regions."



Signing of the Canal Solidaire agreement
on 28 February 2019 © Y. Cadart CD62

THE COMPOSITION OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT EEIG



Representative of Voies Navigables de France (VNF)

Isabelle Matykowski,
Regional director of Voies navigables de France
Nord - Pas-de-Calais
Manager of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG

The 4300 members of Voies Navigables de France staff work everyday to secure the waterway public service. VNF, a Public Administrative Establishment of the French Ministry for the Environment, sustainable development and energy, mainly focuses on: Infrastructure and engineering works: it manages, maintains and develops the largest European network (6700 km of canals, rivers and canalised rivers, and close to 4000 engineering works, 40,000 hectares of public river property).

Goods transport: it manages and promotes river freight by contributing to modal shift and promoting multimodal logistics. Tourism/river transport: it maintains and protects facilities and environments on the waterways to support river tourism as a lever for local economic development.

Sustainable development/water: it optimises water management with an environmentally responsible approach and preserved biodiversity. It facilitates exchange between economic and institutional players (freighters, carriers, local authorities, tourism) to develop the waterways sector.

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**SOCIÉTÉ
DU CANAL
SEINE-NORD
EUROPE**

Representative of the Société
du Canal Seine-Nord Europe (SCSNE)

Jérôme Dezobry,
Chairman of the board

The Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe (SCSNE) is a public establishment dedicated to manage the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe canal (CSNE) between Compiègne and Aubencheul au Bac. Created in May 2016 via legislation, it began work in 2017. Its role is also to promote local economic development related to this new infrastructure. The SCSNE manages the completion of design and regulatory studies, prepares authorisation submissions and prepares calls for tender that will enable companies to be chosen to build the canal; to monitor work and the opening of the canal, which will be transferred and managed by Voies Navigables de France. As a partnership establishment, the SCSNE involves local authorities in the management of the operation via three local committees (Noyon/Compiègne, Santerre/Haute-Somme and Atois/Cambrais). Local authorities can thus express their proposals to improve the project and the work on the edge of the waterway. The SCSNE is managed by a supervisory board, chaired by Xavier Bertrand, the current president of the Hauts-de-France Region. The supervisory board includes representatives from the Hauts-de-France Region, the Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Oise and Somme Départements as well as representatives of the State, Voies Navigables de France, the Prefet of the Hauts-de-France Region, and two members of Parliament (National Assembly and Senate).

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Representative of Vlaamse Waterweg NV (DVW)

Frank Serpentier,
Administrator

De Vlaamse Waterweg nv is an autonomous agency of the Flemish authorities, responsible for the management of inland waterways in Eastern and Western Flanders. Since 1 January 2018, the organisation has been renamed "De Vlaamse Waterweg NV" (Flemish Waterways) following merger with NV De Scheepvaart. Thus, the Flemish region will have a single manager for all the waterways in its territory. Flanders has one of the densest inland waterways networks in Europe. The mission of De Vlaamse Waterweg nv is to manage and develop waterways into a powerful network that contributes to the economy, the wealth and viability of Flanders. To achieve this, De Vlaamse Waterweg nv promotes the multifunctional use of canals and inland waterways, taking the interests of all player into account. The organisation pays particular attention to safety and advocates for an integrated water management system. De Vlaamse Waterweg nv has a role to play within society in general and has a modern, innovative and forward-looking policy, aiming to create a more mobile, safer and greener Flanders.

One of the major strategic projects for De Vlaamse Waterweg nv is the "Seine Schelde Vlaanderen" project, which is part of a major project to promote river shipping on a European scale. By improving navigation for larger useful load barges, Seine Schelde Vlaanderen aims to develop freight on waterways and offer a convincing alternative to road transport. To reach this target, Flanders is working with France and Wallonia to offer a solid and adequate solution that guarantees the future of inland waterways.

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Representative of the Public Service
of Wallonia (SPW)

Christelle Viaud-Mouclier,
Administrator

The SPW Mobility and Infrastructures initiates and coordinates the policies defined by Wallonia in terms of the mobility of people and the transportation of goods. As a genuine stakeholder promoting more sustainable mobility and a supporter of socio-economic development for the Walloon region, it takes action in many sectors, including that of the inland waterways. At the local level, it coordinates, supports and monitors the actions run by other organisations and local players in the area of mobility. While taking action in matters concerning the rules and regulations, the SPW Mobility and Infrastructures also works on modernising, servicing and controlling the road and waterway networks as well as those dedicated to soft mobility. More specifically, in terms of the waterways, the SPW Mobility and Infrastructures promotes the development of waterway transport through the development of intermodal hubs and hydraulic infrastructures. It monitors the smooth running of the engineering structures and dams and contributes to the development of the port areas in collaboration with the autonomous ports.

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Locked gate replacement at Les Fontinettes © VNF



Harelbeke lock © De Vlaamse Waterweg NV

CHAP. 2

INLAND PORTS, ADDED VALUE AT THE HEART OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK

The synergy and networking of the inland ports of the Seine-Scheldt network are part of a major objective to get public and private agents to work together to develop new competitive and sustainable multimodal services of benefit to the logistics of the production and consumption industries of six European regions.



1. A NETWORK OF INLAND PORTS SUPPORTING EUROPEAN INDUSTRY

THE HEART OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK

The Seine-Scheldt network will provide 1100 km of large-gauge waterway links, 24 hours a day. These routes will connect six European regions (Normandy, Île-de-France, Grand Est, Hauts-de-France in France, Flanders and Wallonia in Belgium), three metropolises (Paris, Lille and Brussels) as well as five seaports (Le Havre, Rouen, Dunkirk, Antwerp and Zeebrugge) and inland ports. As interfaces between their regions and the outside world, industrial basins, exchange nodes and sources of added value, these ports are the driving forces behind the implementation of the Seine-Scheldt network's objectives. The location of the logistics and industrial activities within the inland ports, multimodal platforms or docks simplifies trade and the transformation of value for the industrial activities. This is the whole point of the

approach undertaken in Flanders since the 1990s with the ENA (Economic Network Albert Kanaal) approach.

Aware of the key role of the inland port network, the Seine-Scheldt EEIG is preparing a study on the evaluation of the Seine-Scheldt port network and its potential to promote multimodal and energy development. The objective is to define the investments to be made between 2020 and 2028 in the six regions covered to yield the full effect of the river infrastructure network when the Seine-Nord Europe canal is opened. Conducted in close collaboration with the ports, the railway infrastructure managers and the local authorities, this study will be the subject of an intense consultation with all the users, shippers, carriers and logisticians.

It will be used to specify the funding options that are eligible for future European tenders at two levels: the regional level for financing the specific infrastructures and facilities of each port with its local partners; the European level for the financing of the Seine-Scheldt multimodal infrastructure, the improvement of its energy efficiency and the development of European standards and innovative solutions with the increased use of digital technology to foster a modal shift to the waterways.

THE PORTS ARE THE DRIVERS NEEDED TO ATTAIN THE GOALS OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK



Canal Albert © De Vlaamse Waterweg nv

OLIVIER BERGER

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR OF VOIES NAVIGABLES DE FRANCE (VNF)

"In France, we have not invested in new river canals for more than 50 years. The Seine-Scheldt project is an extraordinary opportunity to invent the waterway transport of the 21st century, with solutions that could potentially be very different from those we have today. This network will shake up the equilibriums that exist today, including the competitive equilibriums, while also creating development opportunities in areas such as connectivity, accessibility, new waterway uses, etc. It's a project that reshuffles the cards, with many opportunities to be seized right now by working with all stakeholders. I am thinking, for example, of how new technologies can contribute to the design of boats and smart equipment or the improvement of boat/port interfaces. To take advantage of these opportunities, we must work within the context of a global plan, considering each link without losing sight of the entire waterway transport chain, and increase exchanges with the users and communities to create value together."



STÉPHANE RAISON

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MAJOR SEAPORT OF DUNKERQUE

"For our port, the Seine-Scheldt network will be an important factor in the transformation of the transport network. It will not only give us access to the Paris region. It will create a waterway connection between our platforms in the north of the Hauts-de-France and those in the south, and will allow us to build multimodal platforms on the whole linear system. The traffic will increase and we will be able to work in synergy with the other local agents on installing a low-carbon industrial fabric along the entire route in order to develop activities on the waterfront. For example: today, we send malts from our basin to the port of Antwerp, where they are transformed into beers which are then exported. Tomorrow, we could carry out these transformation activities on site. Going beyond a reflection on transport, there is an industrial reflection to be conducted under the leadership and governance of the region. This reflection involves everyone and will require coordination between the ports. Indeed, we have created Norlink Ports, the association of northern ports, with this in mind, in preparation for the implementation of the Seine-Scheldt network."

CONCERTED AND COORDINATED ACTION

The creation of the Seine-Scheldt network encourages sea and waterway ports to pursue and intensify a cooperation policy that started several years ago. This cooperation covers various subjects, ranging from land development to the development of integrated multimodal solutions, including the creation of storage and transshipment facilities on the waterfront, the road and rail connections needed for the docks or multimodal platforms to take shape, or the pooling of boats and fixed and mobile handling equipment. In France, in accordance with state objectives, the ports prefer a route-based approach. Assembled as part of Haropa, the Paris-Seine-Normandie ports process nearly 120 million tonnes of maritime and waterway traffic per year and manage nearly 2500 acres of land and land reserves. Thanks to their alliance, they can highlight

a common commercial offer positioned at the level of the largest European port complexes. In the Hauts-de-France, Norlink Ports is made up of about 20 maritime and multimodal hubs which together enhance the port potential of the region. Highly involved in the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe canal, the association is preparing to open by developing new alternative intra-regional transport schemes. In 2019, the two Seine and Nord routes began to identify common work topics. In particular, they decided to reflect together on how the Seine-Scheldt EEIG could support the creation of the network and encourage the modal shift.

AS FOR NORLINK PORTS, IT IS MADE UP OF ABOUT 20 HUBS THAT ENHANCE THE PORT POTENTIAL OF THE REGION

Port de Bethune © Pascal Brunet

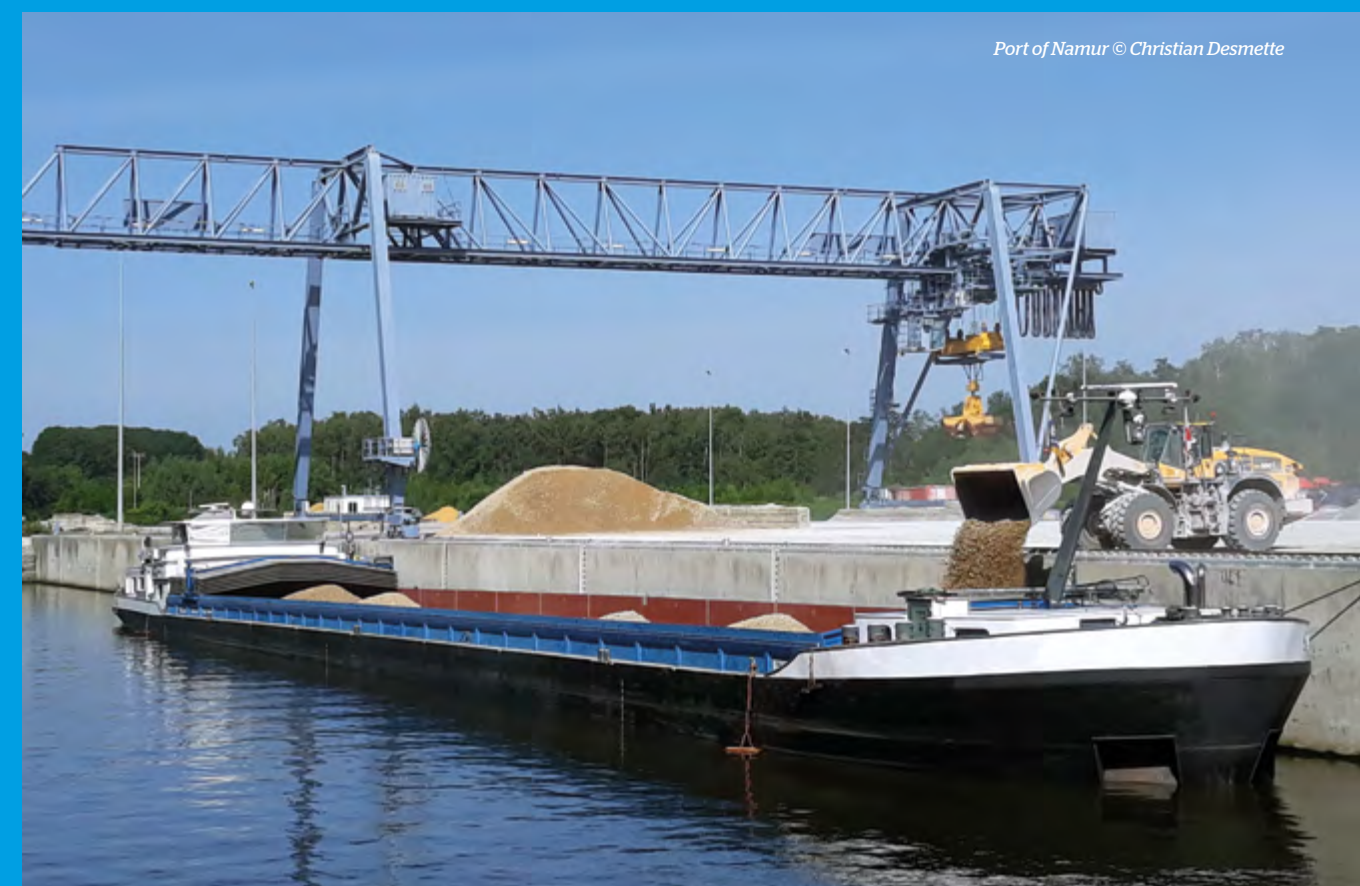


DOMINIQUE DE PAUL DE BARCHIFONTAINE

DIRECTOR OF THE AUTONOMOUS PORT OF NAMUR

“There are four river ports in Wallonia: Liège, Namur, PACO and Charleroi. They are all general interest associations with public shareholders. The autonomous port of Namur is a small structure whose organisation is based on a management contract signed with the Walloon region which defines the vision, missions and objectives to be achieved. One of these objectives is to promote the waterway traffic of goods by developing the land that we have been asked to manage along the waterway so that they can accommodate businesses. We manage about 400 acres of land, which represents 5½ miles of docks and about 140 concessions to about 100 different companies. The port can only grant land adjacent to the waterway to companies using the waterway transport system. We are proceeding by concluding contracts through long-term concessions with a renewable term of 30 years. Consequently, the turnover rate of the companies is low and will not change with the arrival of the Seine-Scheldt network. However, this project is very interesting because, thanks to the future network, the agent companies will be able to extend their activities to the north of France and find new markets. This will increase the volume of goods transported by the waterways, which currently accounts for about 5.5 million tonnes per year. This will also help to diversify the traffic, which is currently primarily concentrated in certain sectors such as quarry products, raw materials for the construction sector and the transportation of grain, waste and hydrocarbons.”

Port of Namur © Christian Desmette



In Belgium, the ports and their partners are also preparing to tackle the logistical challenges brought about by the Seine-Scheldt network through developing cooperation.

The stated objective of the central and western autonomous port ("PACO"), which will border the future Seine-Nord Europe canal in Wallonia, is to be ready when the network operations start in order to capture as many flows as possible from the start. The infrastructures are adapted accordingly and a plan deployed over ten years by the Walloon public service will upgrade the gauge of most of the canals from 1,350 tonnes to 2,000 tonnes. The locks will be modernised and new terminals will be installed at the strategic points: at Wambrechies on the Lys, at Pecq and at Baudour on the Upper Scheldt, and at Ghlin on the Mons-Condé canal. The dredging, begun in France, of the Condé-Pommeroeul canal with a view to its reopening, will be added to this.

Flanders is facing a double challenge: that of improving the future north-south link but also bringing the east closer to the west by developing the Valenciennes-Tournai-Kortrijk-Roeselare-Zeebrugge route. Consequently, alongside the port cooperations developed in each country and region covered by the Seine-Scheldt network, the cross-border dimension of the project is yielding international collaborations. For example, links have been forged between the Walloon port of Charleroi and Valenciennes in French Hainaut. The year 2019 saw further relationships being forged, as illustrated by the signing of a work protocol between the ports of the Nord route in France and Antwerp in Belgium to find potential synergies.

These coordinated actions in France, Flanders and Wallonia are crucial in being able to attain the strategic objectives of the Seine-Scheldt network.



CATHERINE MAHEUX

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN AUTONOMOUS PORT

"There are already regular freight lines on the Lys, Upper Scheldt and Mons-Condé canal and projects have been initiated to increase the pooling of boats and the consolidation of the shipments. Danzer will set up a stopping point at the Ghlin terminal, on the Mons-Condé canal. Our goal is to develop existing connections to take advantage of the development potential provided by the Seine-Scheldt network. This is important for the competitiveness of the waterway mode: in the port of Antwerp, for example, there are three container unloading points, but at least five containers are required per trip for unloading to be given priority. We meet regularly with our supply chain partners and are open to any project that generates business and jobs, regardless of the nationality of the stakeholders. Competition should not be a cause for concern, as we can all gain by joining forces and developing synergies."



DIRK DE SMET

DIRECTOR OF THE AUTONOMOUS PORT OF CHARLEROI

"The Seine-Scheldt network greatly expands the range of possibilities for the ports of Wallonia, that have every interest in seizing the opportunities it offers to develop waterway transport. This is particularly true at a time when environmental issues are taking priority and when road congestion is attaining critical levels. In our region, the project must, in my opinion, be built on an international scale first and foremost, because the strength of the Seine-Scheldt link is to open up a gateway to half of Europe. Taking advantage of the arrival of the network to develop business means calling into question established business models to see where and how we can make improvements. Naturally, it also requires a collaborative approach: the ports, including those from different regions and countries, must work together and forge partnerships with agents other than those of the waterways, because the issues relating to mobility are of concern to everyone. The cooperation already exists. For instance, I discuss matters every month with the directors of the other Walloon ports within the framework of a dedicated platform created several years ago, and our port of Charleroi works with that of Maubeuge and with VNF on an automated barge project on the Sambre."



2. MULTIMODAL COOPERATION UNDERPINNING INTEGRATED LOGISTICS

MOVING TOWARDS A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL

The increased cooperation between the ports of the Seine-Scheldt network and their partners has become essential given the project's strategic view, i.e. the construction, on a European scale, of a new multimodal economic model.

Designed in 2004 and constantly refined since, this model based on the waterway, railway and road relies on interconnected infrastructures and integrates all the links in the waterway logistics value chain. It involves coordinating logistical and industrial processes, data sharing, the automation and increasing digitisation of operations, etc. These are just some of the reasons why it is so important to build alliances between ports. It explains certain initiatives, such as the launch in December 2018 by Haropa,

in partnership with VNF, of a plan to improve the competitiveness of the inland waterway transport of sea containers on the Seine basin. This plan is aimed at working with all the professionals concerned (shippers, ship-owners, handlers, transport operators) on modernising the network and the fleet, and pooling services in the form of workshops, which have been organised since 2019. Haropa is also working with SNCF Réseau to create new regular routes. Thanks to this collaboration, there is now a waterway shuttle service by Bolloré Logistics' that links Le Havre, Rouen and Gennevilliers to Bonneuil-sur-Marne upstream from Paris, as well as a rail service that links Le Havre and French-speaking Switzerland, in partnership with the port of Marseille-Fos and Naviland Cargo.

Extensively associated with the work of the EEIG between 2013 and 2016 on the Amsterdam-Marseille multimodal corridor, industrialists from the various sectors, the main waterway transport contracting authorities, have also agreed to build this new economic model, directed towards an integrated transport system: a system that brings ports, carriers and shippers together to provide a competitive end-to-end offer by including pre- and post-shipments. The agents of this logistics offer, anticipating the future flows of the Seine-Scheldt network, will also be involved in the coming years in developing multimodality on the Seine-Scheldt port network and taking full advantage of the economic and environmental effects of the project by 2028.



Port du Havre - Port 2000 © Eric Hourri HAROPA



BAPTISTE MAURAND

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE PORT OF LE HAVRE (HAROPA)

"As the President of the French Republic recalled during the recent maritime economy conference, the Seine-Nord Europe Canal is a key issue on which the competitiveness and progress of all the regions and ports depends. It is essential that it allows our Haropa ports to extend their natural hinterland to the North of France. For Rouen, the leading cereal exporting port in Western Europe, for example, it will be an opportunity to recover the shipments of cereals grown in Picardie. It will only create value if it links the extraction area of the Calais region with the Île-de-France concrete plants and ramps up the supply of construction materials to the Île-de-France region. These are challenges for which we must start to prepare, right now."

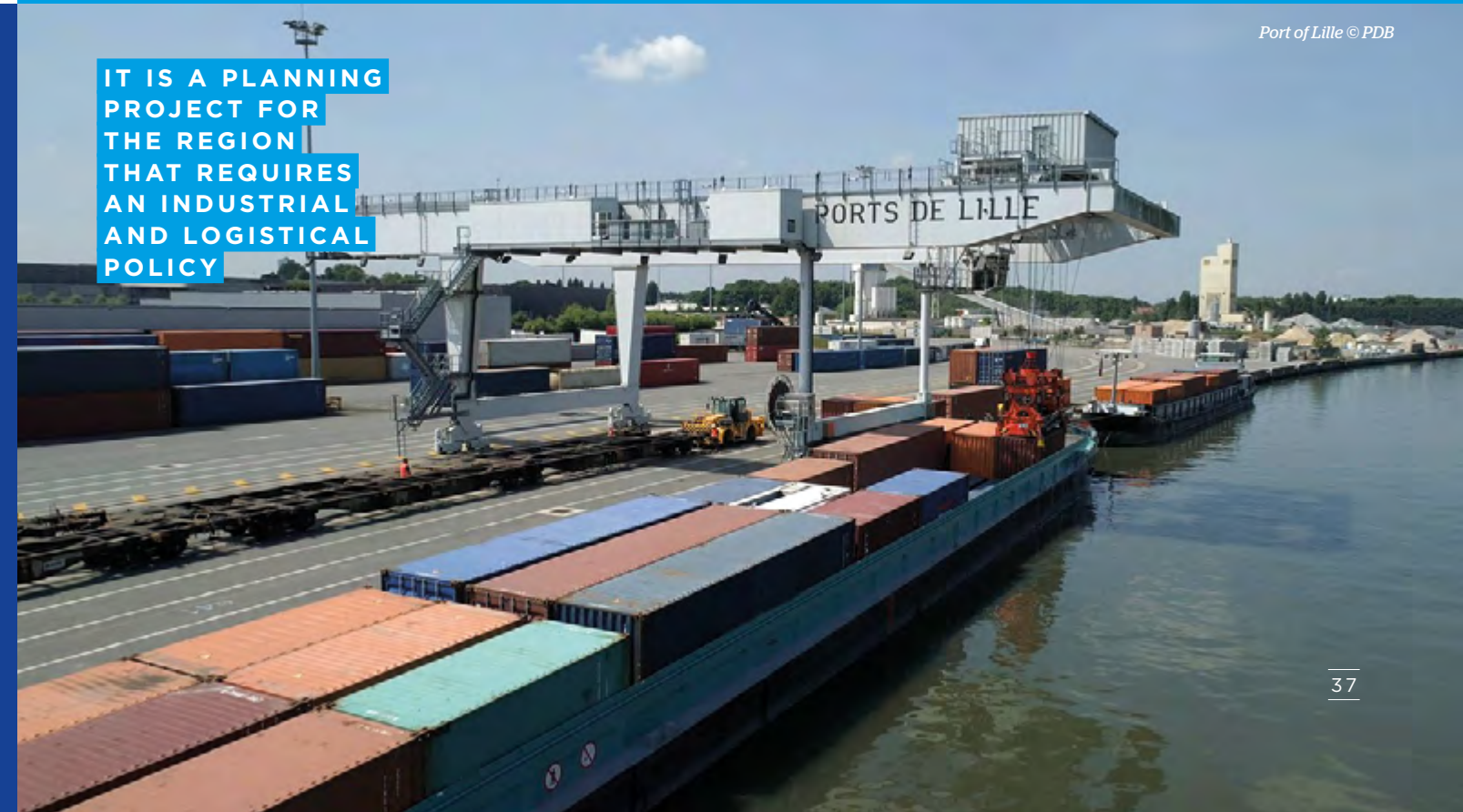


XAVIER-YVES VALÈRE

GENERAL DELEGATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORD ROUTE
PREFECTURE OF THE HAUTS-DE-FRANCE REGION

"The Seine-Scheldt network is not just a technical infrastructure project, it is a regional planning project that requires an industrial and logistical policy. Once the public decision to build this network was taken, the first challenge for the port and logistics agents was to work out how to make the best possible use of it. In order to answer this question, the cooperation between ports and, beyond, between regional logistics agents must be developed in order to respond in a coordinated way to the shared challenges posed by the energy, ecological and digital transitions. In periods of transition, it is not enough simply to have an environment that is open to competition, despite its importance in facilitating innovation.

It is also necessary to have bodies capable of building partnerships and exchanging best practices. The coordination of the Nord route makes it possible to identify and conduct a set of operational actions in synergy in the port and logistics sectors to take full advantage of this large-gauge network for the Hauts-de-France. Its 2020-2025 action plan aims to develop collective initiatives to promote consolidated shipments, improve performance and enhance the environmental excellence of the supply chain, in order to deploy a smart border within the context of Brexit and step up the safety, security and fluidity of the shipments of goods. It is also a place where one can envisage the right levels of the stimulation required: we need to work better with Normandy and Île-de-France not only to activate the modal shift policy between the regions but also across the North Range to give the right level of stimulation to our transition policies that benefit from being standardised on a European corridor."



Port of Lille © PDB

**IT IS A PLANNING
PROJECT FOR
THE REGION
THAT REQUIRES
AN INDUSTRIAL
AND LOGISTICAL
POLICY**

A NETWORK OF LOGISTICS AND INDUSTRIAL PLATFORMS TO OPTIMISE FLOWS

The implementation of this new multimodal economy model will rely on a network of logistics and industrial platforms, and a new integrated multimodal logistics offer. Whether they are located on the Seine, the Oise, the future Seine-Nord Europe canal, the Dunkerque-Scheldt link, the Meuse, the Scheldt or the Lys, these platforms will be used to pool and optimise the flow of goods shipped in bulk or in containers.

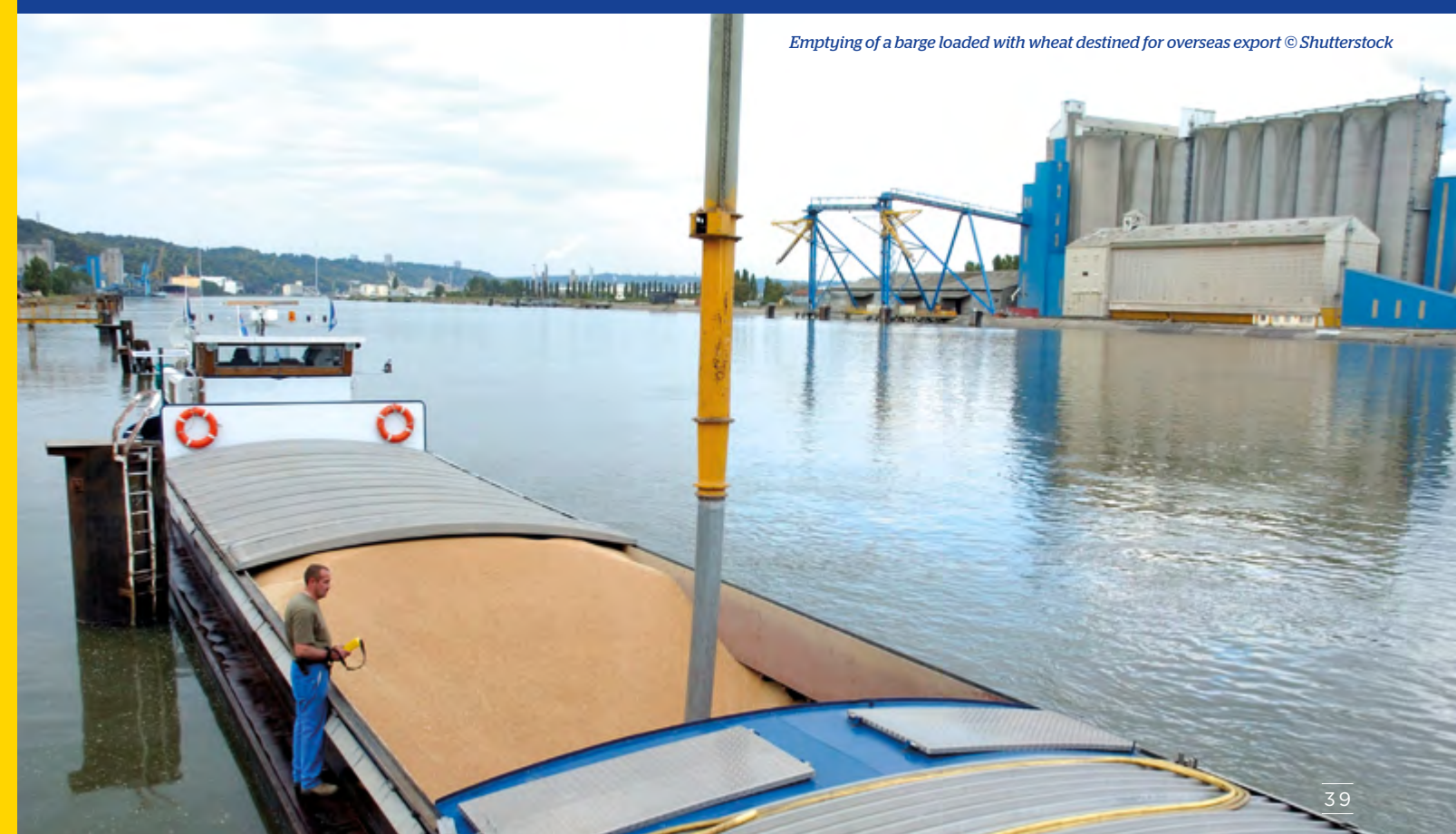
As part of the Seine-Scheldt project, those that already exist are being enlarged and modernised. This is the case in Flanders for the Wilsbeke waterway terminal on the Lys and the Roeselare waterway terminal on the Roeselare-Lys canal. New platforms will also see the light of day. In Wallonia, the Val d'Escaut-Port de Peck busi-

ness park will, for example, complete the port facilities of Vaulx. Along the future Seine-Nord Europe canal, four platforms located in Noyon in the Oise, Nesle and Péronne in the Somme, and Marquion in the Pas-de-Calais will facilitate the expansion of the hinterland of the French seaports and the deployment of a new consolidated logistics offer that can make good use of the intermodality between maritime, waterway, rail and road transport modes. The commitment and investment of the shippers working in collaboration with the carriers is essential to make the modal shift reliable over time.

THESE PLATFORMS WILL BE USED TO POOL AND OPTIMISE THE FLOWS OF GOODS SHIPPED IN BULK OR IN CONTAINERS



Canal Albert © De Vlaamse Waterweg nv



Emptying of a barge loaded with wheat destined for overseas export © Shutterstock



BRUNO BOUVAT-MARTIN 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT OF AXÉRÉAL

"In recent years, the share of waterway transport in our logistics has dropped in favour of road transport. We couldn't continue as before given the damaging effects of road transport on the environment as well as the societal demands. So we thought about ways to reverse the trend. During these reflections, it emerged that the shippers no longer own their vessels, creating an obstacle to the use of the waterways. We had to find enough boats and organise ourselves differently by developing synergies between the sectors in order to share the costs. This is what gave rise to Multiregio.

Today, 10 companies, half of which come from the cereals sector and the other half of which are in the construction sector, are working to set up a system of 500-tonne barges grouped in convoys. Initially, they will circulate by being spread out over four waterway areas, namely the Seine Amont and Aval (upstream and downstream), Grand Paris, Oise north and south and the Canal du Nord, Lille Dunkerque Scheldt. The start will be gradual but we believe that, over time, they will be able to transport 3,000 tonnes of goods per week on average with a progressive increase over the years, thanks to a service that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, performed by settled staff, that is trained in advance."

NEW AVENUES FOR CONNECTING THE WATERWAYS, RAILWAYS AND ROADS

To build intermodality, the different modes must “leave their comfort zone” and work together to make smart mobility happen: mobility based not on competition but on the connections and complementary aspects of the waterway, railway and road transport modes, which maintain the continuity of transport services by facing the new challenges of regional development. Recent initiatives and reflections could facilitate this development. In Belgium, for example, the SWING (Single Window for Inland Navigation) project aims to establish a one-stop shop for inland navigation in order to facilitate the integration of waterway transport in the logistics chains. During the sequence devoted to “Smart cities” at the Smart Rivers conference in Lyon, the AREP (planning, research and trade hubs) multi-disciplinary architecture agency and subsidiary of the SNCF, presented the Villefleuve (Rivercity) 2050 project. Its ambition is to think about ways to link up the waterway and railway modes in cities, by reinventing the concept of a dockside in order to decarbonise trade and make it more efficient.



Port of Dunkerque © Didier Carette NAI Photos

**MOBILITY BASED
NOT ON COMPETITION
BUT ON THE CONNECTIONS
AND COMPLEMENTARY
ASPECTS OF THE WATERWAY,
RAILWAY AND ROAD
TRANSPORT MODES**



JEAN DE BETHUNE

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT - WEST FLANDERS PROVINCE

“The link between the Seine and the Scheldt is one of the cornerstones on which the logistics of tomorrow can be built. Waterway transport is not only significantly more sustainable but it also helps to solve the problem posed by the exponential increase in the congestion of land-based traffic. Betting on the multiplication of transport options by specifically developing waterway traffic between France and West Flanders is a step that must be taken. The current navigable connections mainly serve West Flanders towards the east. The Seine-Scheldt project creates multiple waterway transport opportunities between our province of Flanders and France by proposing an opening towards the west. Consequently, this link represents considerable added value for our region. In addition, the project includes a navigable route between the Lys and the Scheldt, which offers an opening towards the south.”

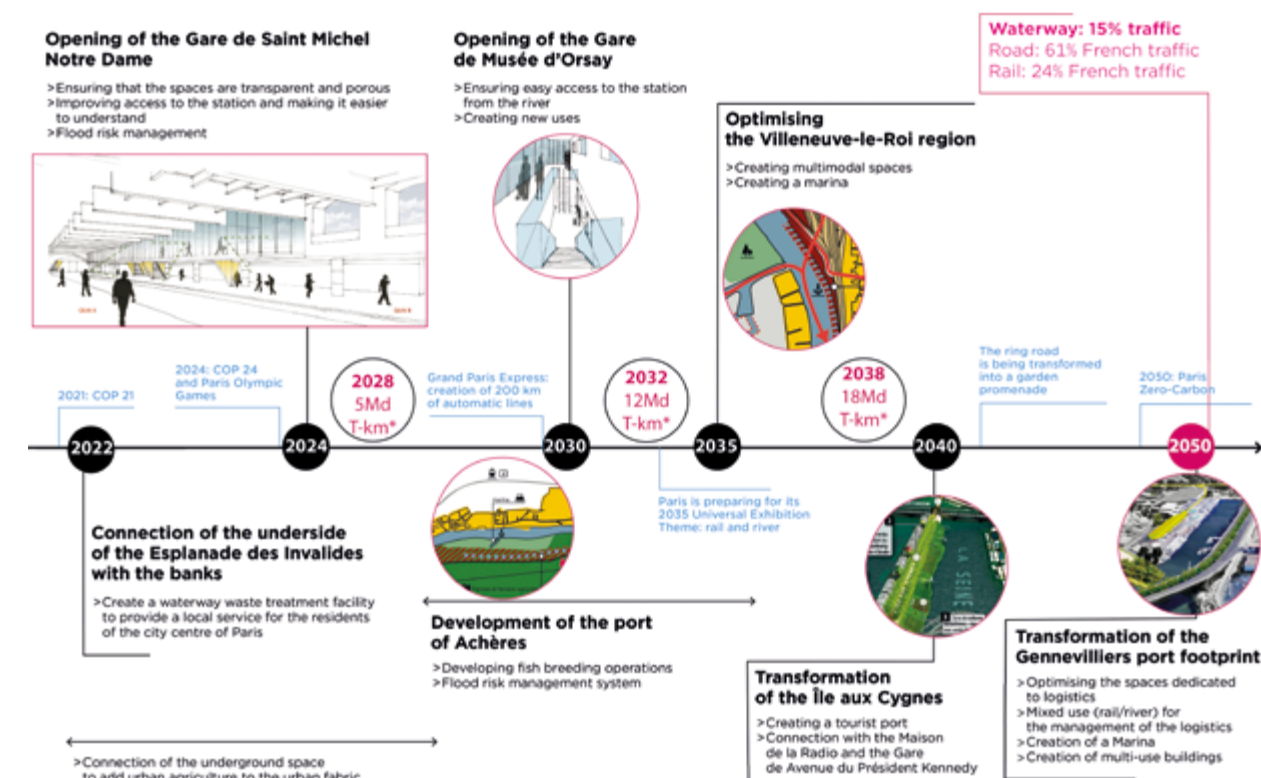


MICHELLE-ANGE MAURICE

ARCHITECT DPLG AT AREP, A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ARCHITECTURE AGENCY

“Villefleuve (Rivercity) 2050 was one of the projects selected following an internal competition launched by AREP as part of a reflection on the objective of attaining carbon neutrality in 2050. In developing the project, we started from the observation that we have stopped investing massively in France in the railways and waterways. Despite the fact that they used to be key transport modes during both industrial revolutions, today their traffic is declining, unlike what is happening in other countries like Belgium. However, these modes are in keeping with the resolve of society to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and there is significant room for growth in the level of traffic.

The Villefleuve 2050 project is looking at what could be called a “blind spot”: the rail/waterway connection in towns, which is not optimised or even organised. The idea is to focus on a cross-sector approach to find development solutions on the docksides where the two modes meet, but where nothing happens. This can only be achieved if the agents operate as part of a network with sector-based governance systems. They also need to co-construct intermodality by defining the criteria of potential opportunities, find potential pooling solutions and promote a blend of different uses with a vision that the regions can rally behind.”



3 - DEVELOPMENT ORGANISED AROUND REGIONAL PROJECTS

CO-CONSTRUCTED SOLUTIONS

Beyond port cooperation, in order to develop an ecosystem that promotes development around the Seine-Scheldt network, there has to be unity among all the agents involved in regional projects. The objective is to have access to the most accurate snapshot of the needs and expectations so that the best possible solutions can be co-constructed. This is achieved by choosing the solution that is most ideally suited to each issue at every regional level. This approach is already finding practical applications in the regions. An example of this is the recent creation by DVW of eNES (for “Economisch Netwerk Seine-Schelde”), a forum for economic cooperation or partnership on waterway logistics and its development in the Flemish region. Its central objectives are to step up exchanges with the industrial and logistics sectors in the west of Flanders, stimulate the economic use of the waterway and promote innovation and research in the waterway sector.

NEW FORMS OF REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The regional projects implemented around the waterway bring about new forms of collaboration and new approaches. The Seine route, with four regions directly concerned by the Seine-Scheldt project (Normandy, Île-de-France, Centre-Val de Loire and Grand-Est) will therefore be an important element of cooperation for the agents and the vitality of the network. What's more, this applies to the construction sector, agriculture, recycling or the mass distribution sector in equal measure. It will be used to establish short supply chains and logistics solutions between the production and consumption areas.

STIMULATING THE ECONOMIC USE OF THE WATERWAY AND PROMOTING INNOVATION AND RESEARCH IN THE WATERWAY SECTOR



PAUL GERARD

GENERAL TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS COORDINATOR
SOCIÉTÉ DE DÉVELOPPEMENT PROVINCIAL WEST FLANDERS

“To enhance and promote waterway navigation in its area, the Province of West Flanders asked its Provincial Development Agency to take care of some essential transshipment infrastructures. In this respect, the Wielsbeke waterway terminal on the Lys is currently in its first extension phase. In addition, the agency is developing the Roeselare River Terminal on the Roeselare-Lys canal in partnership with the De Vlaamse Waterweg. We are also looking to the waterways to open up the Westhoek region thanks to the construction of two regional transshipment centres. By removing the obstacles, we are hoping that these initiatives will contribute to the economic profitability of waterway transport. These investments are being made in preparation for the Seine-Scheldt project.”



KOENRAAD MARCHAND

REGIONAL COORDINATOR - WEST FLANDERS PROVINCE

“Seine-Scheldt is crucial for the future of freight transport in Europe. The programme is investing not only in the infrastructures needed for a sustainable transition, but also in stimulating development and innovation in the planning of future multimodal logistics hubs. West Flanders is firmly committed to taking on the logistical challenges created by the network, as part of a coherent approach. Our Province is focusing on three types of projects. First, the optimisation of the flow of goods transported in bulk or in containers through investments in logistics platforms like the Wielsbeke container terminal on the Lys. Next, innovations such as unmanned navigation, which further lower the cost of waterway transportation and make smaller shipments more competitive when compared with other modes of transportation. Finally, there is the development of ecological and recreational infrastructures on the Scheldt for the general public to rediscover the waterway and appreciate its value.”



Model view of the Seine-Métropole Ouest Port by 2040 © HAROPA



ERIC BERGER

PRESIDENT OF THE CESER ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

“At the Île-de-France Economic, Social and Environmental Council, we have always said that the Seine-Scheldt network was a necessary entry and exit gateway for the region. The Seine route is not sufficient for fulfilling the link with a world-class capital. Today, the waterway in Paris is a real “cul de sac”, without the capacity for every size of vessel, while a large proportion of the goods manufactured in Île-de-France must pass through Le Havre to get to market. The construction of the Seine-Nord Europe canal is therefore vital for our economy. It is also important for ensuring the ecological transition and it will have a social impact by creating jobs. The Seine Métropole Ouest port alone, a multimodal platform under construction to the west of the Paris agglomeration which will be dedicated to the transport of raw or prefabricated materials for the construction industry, will employ 3,000 people. To these jobs will be added those generated by dockside activities, since many spaces are already reserved for production sites.”

In the Hauts-de-France, the CCI Grand Hainaut, the Valenciennes Métropole urban community and the Porte du Hainaut urban community have joined forces over a number of years as part of the Syndicat Mixte Docks Seine - Nord Europe Scheldt to work together on developing the Scheldt route in a coherent way. Located at the heart of the largest catchment area in Europe, Grand Hainaut is home to a rich and dynamic industrial fabric. Thanks to the dense transport infrastructure networks - including the waterway, which is used extensively with two million tonnes of goods handled each year on the waterway docks of the Valenciennes area - this area also hosts intercontinental logistics activities. Docks Seine - Nord Europe Scheldt would

like to develop this ambition by taking action to improve the multimodal accessibility of the region as a matter of priority. In July 2012, it became the agent for the Ports de l'Escaut, a set of five waterway docks dedicated to the transshipment of goods and a container terminal. This strategy turned out to be very successful since this terminal is today the fourth largest in France behind those of Gennevilliers, Strasbourg and Lyon.

LOCATED AT THE HEART OF THE LARGEST CATCHMENT AREA IN EUROPE, GRAND HAINAUT IS HOME TO A RICH AND DYNAMIC INDUSTRIAL FABRIC



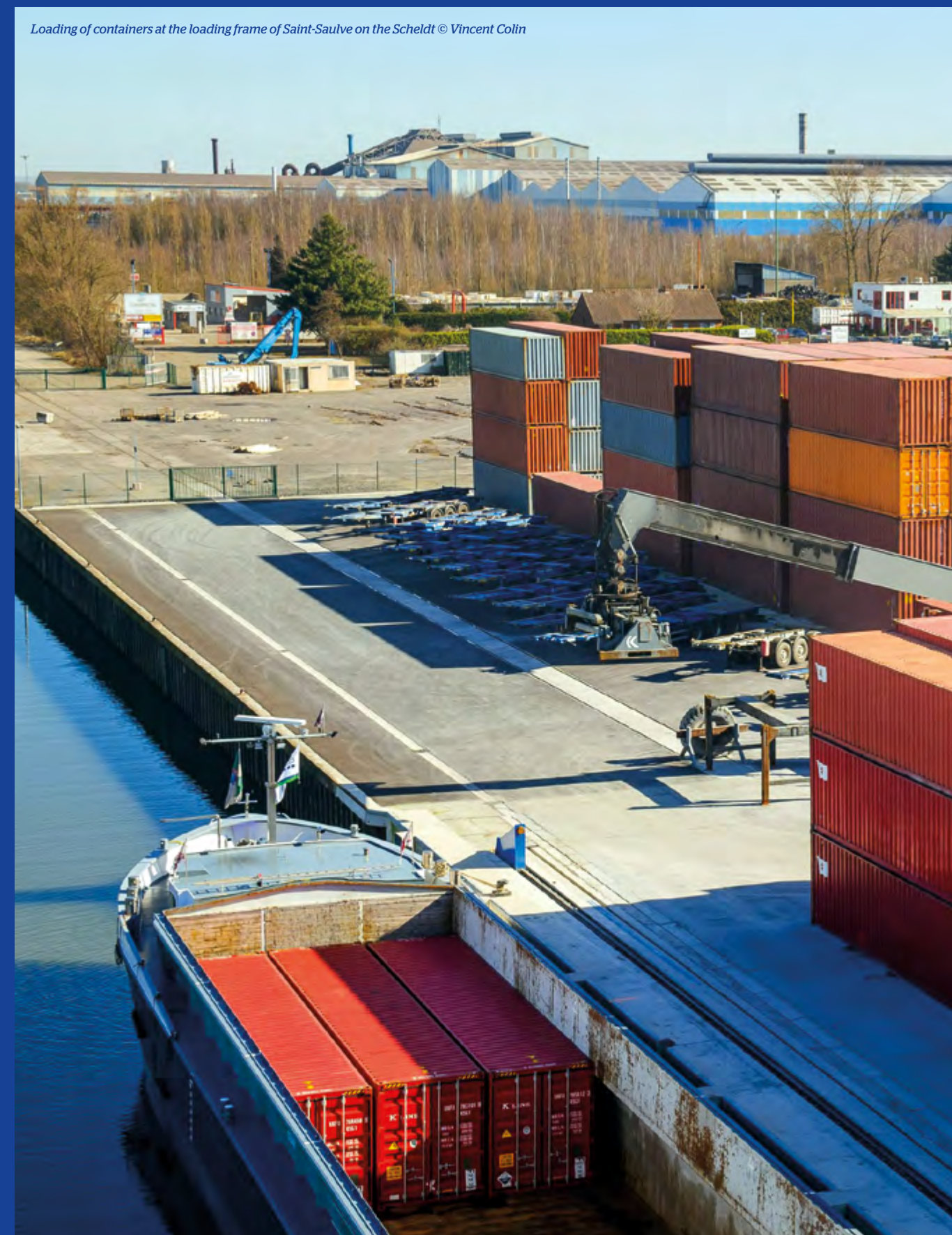
GAUTIER HOTTE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CCI GRAND HAINAUT

"The bonds between all the agents that gravitate around the waterway must be strengthened. What's more, in order to anticipate the needs and develop activities locally, the local authorities must be included in this approach. It is with this in mind that we created the Docks Seine-Nord Europe Scheldt mixed union with the two agglomeration communities. The CCI Grand Hainaut has been the agent for the public docks along the Scheldt since 1955. But we wanted to move forward in a concerted way with a common vision about how to develop the region, and collectively decide on the trade-offs to be made regarding the different needs and uses of the waterway, so that no-one is left out. Thanks to the unity of the group, we were able to invest €9.5 million, with the help of the European Union, the state and some local authorities, to put in place a major modal transfer infrastructure intended to complement the private offer.

The platform was so successful that we decided to invest another €7.5 million to extend it. With the arrival of the Seine-Scheldt network, we are all agreed that we need to intensify the efforts of the collaboration because we can see the interest in optimising the use of our resources and development strategies. We are thinking about creating a new union with an even broader structure associating VNF, which would be responsible for managing all the public and private platforms of the Scheldt route. Having a single waterway manager would coordinate all the activities and investments, forming a new business model about which we feel very confident."

Loading of containers at the loading frame of Saint-Saulve on the Scheldt © Vincent Colin



4 - INNOVATIVE AND CONNECTED PORTS

THE PORTS PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN DIGITISATION

The creation of the Seine-Scheldt network is speeding up the modernisation of waterway transport, and the ports are playing an active part in this modernisation. They contribute to the digital transition in particular, which has become a key aspect of their competitiveness. This is the meaning of the contribution of the Port Autonome du Centre et de l'Ouest in the ST4W smart logistics project, launched within the framework of the European Interreg programme set up to promote economic and social exchanges between five border regions: the Nord - Pas-de-Calais, Champagne-Ardenne and Picardie in France; Wallonia and Flanders in Belgium. This project is being used to test a

real-time tracking system for goods transported by water from start to finish and from one country to another. Each unit transported is identified by a barcode and geolocated. By logging into the port's information system, the shipper can find out where the unit is at any time, down to the individual pallet, container, barge and truck. The system gives an estimated time of arrival and creates automatic alerts in case of a delay or error. It also issues electronic delivery receipts at each stage of the journey, from pre- to post-shipment. There are many benefits, i.e. a reduction of unloading times, the improved safety of waterway transport.



ALAIN O'JEANSON

MANAGING DIRECTOR PARIS TERMINAL

"For Paris Terminal, whose infrastructures are the hub for the combined transport and logistics systems in Île-de-France, the Seine-Scheldt network opens up opportunities, including that of increasing maritime container traffic. However, this requires a global reflection with all the agents concerned, at every level. Further education is still needed regarding waterway transport, which many still consider very restrictive compared to the road transport mode. Access to the ports needs to be improved and the administrative procedures simplified. Work must also be done on interoperability and the convergence between information systems because the shipping companies have difficulty understanding why the systems must be different from one port to another in the same country. The location of the logistics platforms is another crucial issue. There is no need for the networks to be as tightly meshed on the Rhine because we do not have the same industrial fabric. We have to analyse the flows and think about the locations that have a greater potential to develop business. Those, for example, which could be used to link long-distance international traffic and European traffic in order to consolidate as many shipments as possible on both sides."

Remote-control station of Mouy-sur-Seine © VNF Alexandra Lebon



Port of Longueuil-Sainte-Marie © TDS



THE PORTS PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN NEW PRACTICES AND PROCESSES

The activity of the ports is also critical in developing logistics practices and processes in order to make the waterway more appealing and efficient. For the shipping companies, for example, it is essential that goods transported in containers go from point A to point B according to a “one way” system. This means that the empty containers must not return to their point of arrival but be left in storage, once unloaded, on the navigation route concerned. Paris Terminal, the waterway logistics hub located 6 km from the port of Gennevilliers, understood this well and became a benchmark in this area. Those companies, which were initially reluctant, had to be persuaded beforehand because they wanted to optimise the use of their routes by “rotating” their containers as quickly as possible. The development of the maritime container transport on the Seine route will involve continuing these discussions on how to manage the equipment and open up additional storage areas for empty containers.

THE INDUSTRIALISTS WORKING WITH THE PORTS

Sharing information and monitoring products has been part of the daily routine for the industrial agents for many years now. The performance of the port passage and the interface between the inland ports and seaports are central to the competitiveness of the businesses’ logistics. Port communities like that of Paris, Le Havre or Antwerp, or even the pooling projects have also led manufacturers to invest in the field of logistics solutions, a strategic activity of their supply chain. Like all large-scale projects, the three major projects of the decade to come (those of the Grand Paris Express, the Seine-Scheldt multimodal network and the 2024 Olympic Games) will provide major opportunities for innovation and the transformation of the dockside spaces. Those contributing to this transformation will have to do so more openly, with common objectives and shared governance so that the waterway contributes to building a better world.



Eole project - Seine base © Bouygues Construction



FRANÇOIS LAMBERT

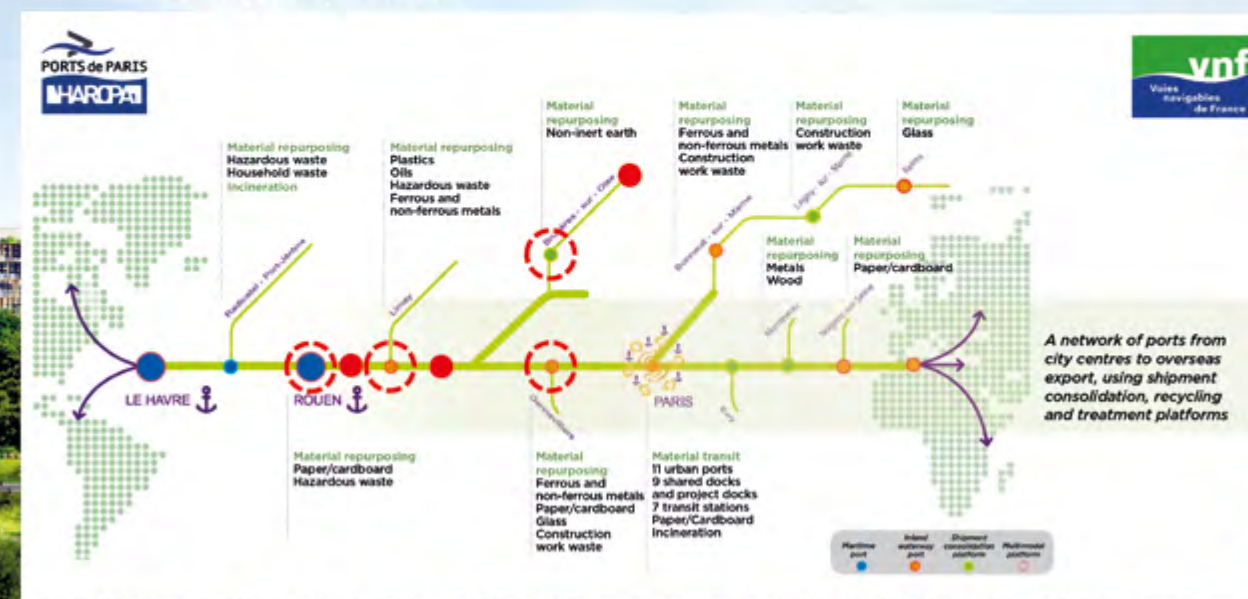
GENERAL DELEGATE GICAN

“A waterway commission was set up within GICAN which gathers together about 20 businesses. In this context of enhanced collaboration, we take an enthusiastic look at the Seine-Scheldt network, which creates opportunities for the development of the whole maritime economy. The local authorities are playing an important role in putting together the project that will give impetus to regional activities in which we can take part. The creation of the Seine-Scheldt network is also very stimulating in terms of R&D and innovation. We see this with the Multiregio project, which combines several industrial sectors, including ours, to build a fleet of self-propelled barges.

Put into circulation around the Seine and the Canal du Nord, these barges will bring a new competitiveness to the waterway transport mode by providing a waterway transport solution to the transport needs emerging from the construction of the Seine-Nord canal and the Grand Paris Express, as well as the construction sites linked to the 2024 Olympic Games. The additional benefit will be the reduced congestion on the roads and railways of the Paris basin.”

Logistics plan for supplies to the 2024 Olympic Games construction works

- Proposal on the HAROPA port
- Proposed private site



Seine basin: suitable outlets © Solideo

CHAP. 3

REVIEW OF THE MAIN MILESTONES OF 2019

Beyond the formative decisions on the financing of the Seine-Scheldt network, 2019 was marked by some significant events and achievements in France, Flanders and Wallonia, leading to closer collaboration between the members of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG, such that they made progress together with the measures for implementing the network's objectives. What's more, progress was made in all the network's activities scheduled during this period.



1 - PROGRESS IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE PROJECT

A DEFINING YEAR FOR THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK AND SCSNE

The implementing decision of 27 June 2019 signed by the European Commission is a major step which, like the mobility solutions framework law ("LOM") passed on 24 December in France, significantly raises the profile of the development of the waterway throughout the Seine-Scheldt network for the next 10 years by setting the calendar and budgetary commitments. For the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe, contracting authority of the construction of the canal since May 2017, which joined the three founding members of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG in 2018, 2019 is a milestone in the history of the project with the inclusion of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal in the mobility solutions framework law, and the signing on 22 November in Nesle, in the presence of the President of the French Republic, of the funding agreement between the state (represented by the Minister for the Ecological Transition, the Minister of Action and Public Accounts and the Secretary of State for Transport), the local

authorities of the Hauts-de-France and the European commission. Indeed, these events have enacted the regionalisation of the SCSNE, by 1st April 2020 at the latest, and the contribution of the state, along with that of the local authorities, to the construction costs of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal, amounting to €1.1 billion.



The members of the EEIG with the international president of PIANC at Smart Rivers Lyon © D. Lachas

NEW COORDINATION ACTIONS

In 2019, the Seine-Scheldt EEIG continued its general project coordination actions, as well as the coordination of the 16 activities of the 2014-2020 CEF. In particular, this was reflected in the financial monitoring of the Grant Agreement (the European financing agreement) and numerous collaborative efforts with the network stakeholders. To complete their daily exchanges, the representatives of VNF, SCSNE, DVW and SPW met monthly, while the inter-governmental commission meets quarterly. Cooperation between the teams has been facilitated by the interface procedures created to simplify exchanges and promote collaborative work. As a result, since the end of 2017, VNF

and the SCSNE have been reflecting together, as part of a technical committee, on the operational and maintenance issues concerning the future Seine-Nord Europe canal, that was built by the canal company and will be managed by VNF. In 2019, this system was supplemented by some bilateral agreements (a framework agreement and agreements on buildings, vehicle management, human resources and professional travel). Another illustration of this interfacing approach occurred in December 2018 when a working group was set up so that the implementing companies of the Seine-Scheldt project could move forwards in a concerted manner on hydraulic management, a key aspect of the future network.

JOINT WORK COMPLETED

For VNF, the SCSNE, DVW and SPW, 2019 was a year that had plenty of talking points and joint work. The implementing bodies of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG, for example, gave a coordinated response to the performance audit of the project launched at the end of 2018 by the European Court of Auditors. They also worked together to prepare the Commission's Implementing Decision and amendment no. 3 to the Grant Agreement, e.g. by making investment forecasts for the 2021-2027 period. The Seine-Scheldt EEIG also contributed to the actions and reflections undertaken on the future of European transport and the waterway. In particular, it participated in the review of the regulations of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), a programme for developing transport infrastructures in the European Union. Similarly, it was involved in discussions on the North Sea Mediterranean corridor, one of the nine priority routes of the trans-European transport networks. Finally, the Seine-Scheldt EEIG was one of the co-organisers of two international events -

Smart Rivers 2019 (Lyon) at the global level and Riverdating (Liège) at the European level - gathering together the agents involved in waterway transport, the environment, hydraulics, ports, renewable energy, reducing the carbon footprint of the fleet and multimodal logistics, especially for urban issues. Over 400 specialists from 34 countries gathered from 30 September to 3 October in Lyon, under the aegis of PIANC (international association for inland navigation and ports), a major international event held for the first time in France in 2019. The other is Riverdating that was held for the 12th time in Liège on 27 and 28 November. These two events were an opportunity for VNF, the SCSNE, DVW and SPW to unite their voices in not only setting out the challenges faced and the progress made on the 1,100 km of the Seine-Scheldt network, but also spreading the word about its economic, social and environmental contributions to European public service policies, which will be of benefit to over 40 million European citizens.



Smart Rivers Lyon 2019 © VNF D. Lachas

2 - PROGRESS OF THE STUDIES AND CONSTRUCTION WORK

IN FRANCE

New milestones were reached in 2019 in the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal. This is particularly the case for the sector 1(Compiègne-Passel), with the launch of the project studies, the submission of the environmental authorisation file and the holding of the plot survey. As for the other sectors 2, 3 and 4 (Passel-Allaines-Ytres-Aubenchoul-au-Bac), the year was marked by the selection of the project managers for the earthworks - structures and the restoration of the communications (TOARC). In addition to these advances, the SCSNE has continued the environmental improvements as well as the education surrounding the project: for example, it spoke out within the context of the renewed regional dialogue in the presence of the elected officials of all the inter-municipalities of the route, before those of the Departmental Council of the Somme and was present at several local events to keep the local population informed. Furthermore, after a seminar attended by 80 people in Arras on 28 February, during which the "Canal Solidaire" agreement was signed with six presidents of departmental councils, the "Canal Entreprises" agreements (with the CCI and the Hauts-de-France Region) and the "Canal Formation" (with the Hauts-de-France region) were adopted by the supervisory board. Now structured around its five systems (employment, training, solidarity, companies and site reception) at the regional and territorial levels, the "Grand Chantier" approach entered its operational phase co-managed by the Hauts-de-France Region and by the state in the 2nd half of 2019.

The launch in France of the Multiregio project, following the agreement signed on 6 May between Voies navigables de France, AIMCC (Federation of Construction Industries), Intercéréales and GICAN (Group of Naval Construction Industries and Activities), was very successful in getting the key economic players of these sectors to offer a new waterway operating mode and construct a new innovative "multi-batch" unit available from 2021 as part of a pooling process between ship- pers, on the entire Seine-Scheldt network remit. In the Seine basin, the Magéo project, i.e. the

upgrading of the Oise between the municipalities of Bray and Nogent, passed an important milestone in 2019, namely the awarding of the works owner assistance contract for land-related services. It will entail the completion of all the land-related procedures and the acquisition of the land where the work is to be carried out. VNF also led two public information meetings on the project. On the Seine Aval (downstream), the project management studies led to the signing of the design-build contract for the renovation and extension of the Méricourt locks, as well as the works, such as the creation of the user services.



In the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the year saw the continued consolidation of the bridges in preparation for the recalibration of the Deûle. The other significant events of the year include the preparatory phase for the reopening of the Condé Pommeroeul canal with the deforestation works and waterproofing work on the compartments that will be used to collect sediments. The Grand Carré lock has been restored and modernised during a large part of 2019, the finishing work on the restoration of the Don lock has been completed and the detailed studies for upgrading and restoration of the Denain lock continued.

These lock repairs are the preparatory works needed to set up the remote control systems for all the locks in the Nord - Pas-de-Calais network, a project for which the construction of the Waziers remote control centre has been completed. This centre is also designed to set up the remote control systems of the installations and locks of the Canal Seine Nord Europe. The recalibration of the Lys Mitoyenne has also made progress on the French side, as demonstrated by the prefectural decree bearing a single authorisation under article L.214-3 I of the Environment Code and the preparatory deforestation work initiated in September as well as the preparatory work for the compensatory measures.

IN WALLONIA

In Wallonia too, the recalibration of the Lys Mitoyenne is making progress. After the completion of the first phase of the work in mid-2018, the second phase started in November 2019. It should upgrade the waterway to the European Vb gauge in the Comines Crossing by 2022. On the Upper-Scheldt, the modernisation of the Tournai crossing continued during the year, with the laying of a symbolic milestone: the deconstruction of the Pont des Troues, after which the invitation to tender for its reconstruction was issued. Still on the Upper Scheldt, the construction of the new Kain weir was completed and that of the Herinnes weir started. The refurbishment of the Walloon part of the Condé Pommeroeul canal, aimed at opening up the canal to class Va vessels, also moved forwards as can be seen by the planning permission obtained in June for building work in Hensies. Progress was also made on the development of the Walloon backbone so that it can be upgraded to the Va

Pont des Troues view © Bureau Greisch



gauge. One of the major advances of the year was the launch of the study to modernise the Nimy-Blaton-Péronnes canals, the publication of the award notice for the development studies of four new locks on the Charleroi canal in Brussels and the launch of works at Landelies on the Sambre.

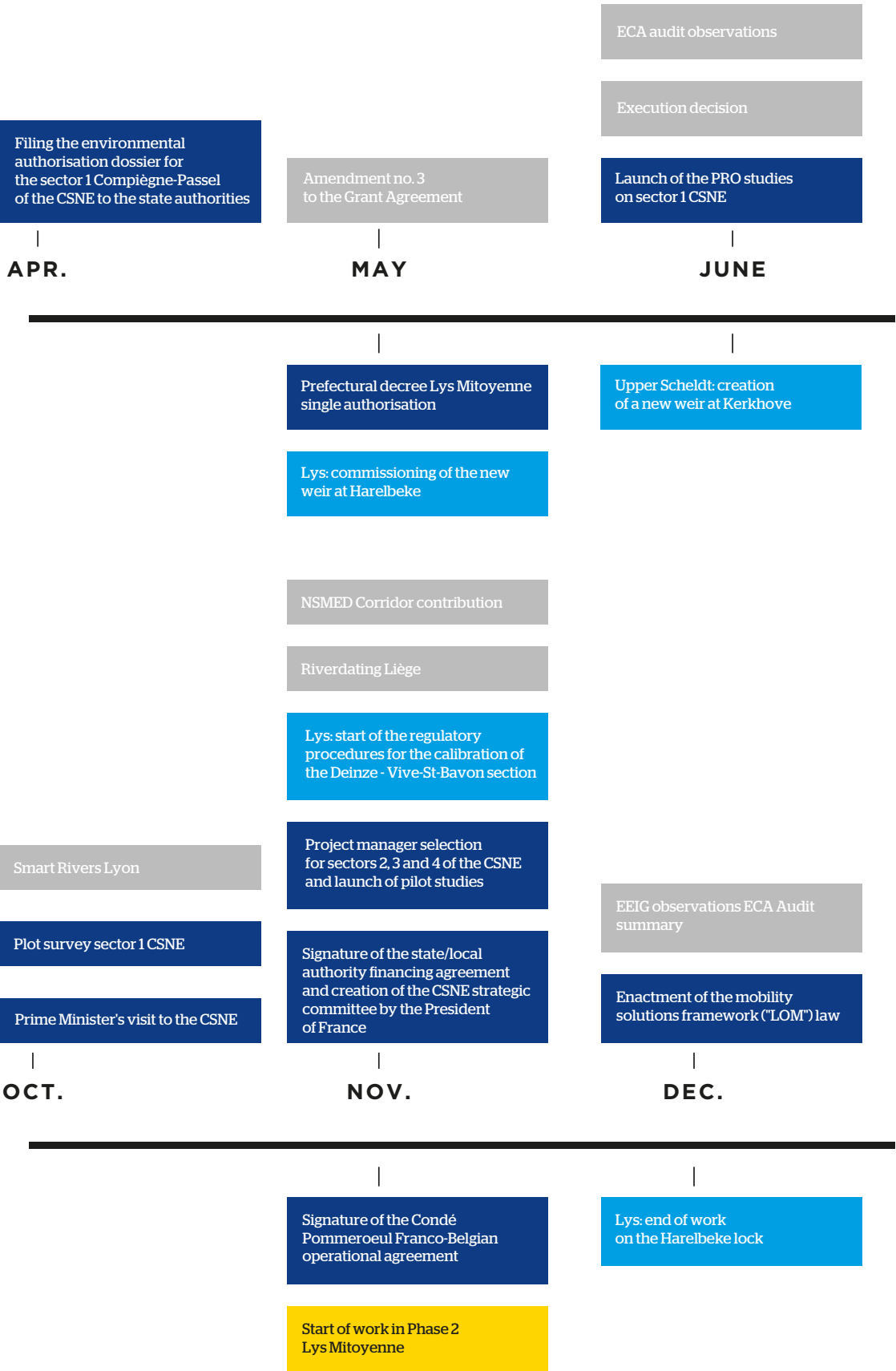
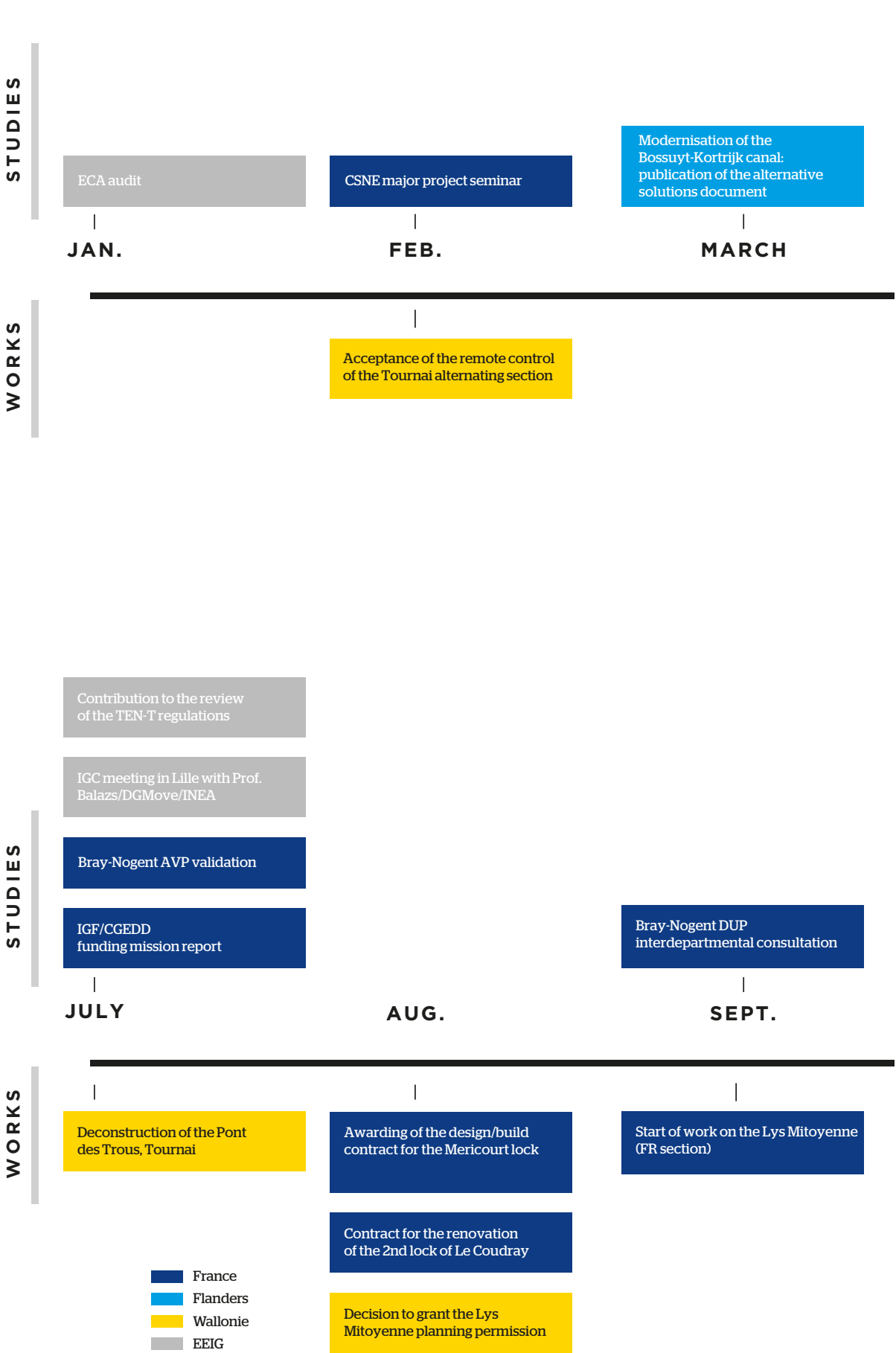
IN FLANDERS

In 2019, Flanders continued to modernise its locks. In Harelbeke, where a new lock was opened in 2018, the final works have been carried out to fit out the public spaces and install a bicycle bridge, a fishway and a hydroelectric turbine. In Vive-Saint-Bavon, the construction of the lock with the Vb gauge, with the construction of the lock chamber and the lock walls. On the Lys, studies and works were carried out on various projects such as the construction of a foot bridge at Nevele or a railway bridge in Kortrijk, the development of the Menen Crossing, the creation of a fishway at Merelbeke and the renovation and extension of the RTW container terminal. Several projects launched on the Upper-Scheldt, the Bossuyt-Kortrijk canal and the Roeselare-Lys canal also advanced during the year. These include: the installation (finalised at the end of 2019) of a weir and a fishway at Kerkhove on the Upper-Scheldt and the construction (still in progress) of a new road bridge at Ingelmunster on the Roeselare-Lys canal.



Nevele Bridge © De Vlaamse Waterweg NV

KEY EVENTS IN 2019



WORKS IN 2019



The works on the lock at Sint-Baafs-Vijve
Wilsbeke district, Lys
© De Vlaamse Waterweg nv



The location of the weirs at Kerkhove - Upper Scheldt
© De Vlaamse Waterweg



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New Hérimmes weir - Upper Scheldt
© SPW - DTIM Pascal Moens



Waziers © VNF



Don lock
© VNF Alexandra Lebon, Didier Gauducheau



Lys © VNF Philippe Houze



Conde © VNF Philippe Houze



Opening of the Pont des Trous © Anaïs Callens



Don lock © VNF -
Alexandra Lebon, Didier Gauducheau



Conde © Photo grouping
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Lock works at Les Fontinettes © VNF



Conde © Photo grouping Ecoterres Dec TRBA



Lock of Méricourt © VNF



Deule © VNF Philippe Houze



Waziers © VNF



175,000
DIRECT/INDIRECT JOBS

360 CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
NEAR THE NETWORK

90 TOURIST PORTS

96 LOCKS

INDUSTRIES:
AGRO-INDUSTRY, AUTOMOTIVE
SECTOR, CONSTRUCTION,
CHEMISTRY, MASS DISTRIBUTION,
RECYCLING, ETC.

2 M OF CONTAINERS SHIPPED
(estimated by 2030)

3,200 ACRES OF
ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITIES

1,100 KM OF
WATERWAYS
(large-gauge H.24)

1 850 VESSELS (freight)
ON THE NETWORK

423 BRIDGES
(road/rail)

150 MT OF GOODS
TRANSPORTED
(estimated by 2030)

60 INLAND PORTS

5 MARITIME PORTS



THE LARGEST EUROPEAN
INLAND WATERWAYS NETWORK

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